

# LUCIUS FLAVUS

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JOSEPH SPILLMANN



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# LUCIUS FLAVUS

An historical tale of the time immediately preceding  
the destruction of Jerusalem.

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By the Reverend Joseph Spillmann, S. J.

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BOOK THE FIRST.

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The Feast of the Passover in the year 66 A. D.



## PREFACE.

There is perhaps in the whole history of the world no drama grander and at the same time more terrible than the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. The fall of Carthage, awful as it must have been, to judge by the accounts given by the writers of antiquity, cannot compare with the fall of Jerusalem and the annihilation of the Jews as a nation. Besides the fate of Jerusalem and its temple possesses a very different interest for the Christian than does the doom of the ancient centre of commerce on the coasts of Africa. In the fearful catastrophes that overtook Zion, we see the fulfilment of our Lord's prophecy, and the execution of the divine judgments upon the people and the city which in culpable blindness rejected the Son of God and nailed Him to the cross of shame.

This momentous event forms the background of the narrative we place before the reader. The principal facts are naturally, taken from Flavius Josephus, since in his well-known historical work, *The Wars of the Jews*, he gives a detailed account of the revolt of the Jews and the whole course of the war which ended with the complete destruction of Jerusalem and its temple; a war of which he was an eye-witness and in which he bore an active part. In the description of the various incidents, except when he recounts his own exploits in the Galilean war, he may be considered as trustworthy. His self-glorification in regard to the siege of Jotapata is too apparent. His numbers also are as a rule greatly overstated. Finally he evidently aims at making this chronicle a flattering tribute to his imperial patrons Vespasian and

Titus. But it certainly was not the intention of the apostate Jew to prove how literally our Lord's prediction of the circumvallation of Jerusalem, the destruction of the city and temple, and the terrible fate of its inhabitants was accomplished. His testimony on this point is all the more important, because he was not himself a Christian or friendly to Christians. The apologetic value of his work cannot be denied even by the unbelievers of our own day, they can only endeavour to deprive it of its force by asserting the prophecies of our Lord in the Gospel which it confirms to be "palpable falsifications and later interpolations".

Unfortunately no such detailed account of the early Christians in Jerusalem, their manner of life and their religious services has been handed down to us as of the political events of the first century. We have been obliged to content ourselves with the information that can be gathered from the Apostles and the Ecclesiastical history by Eusebius of Caesarea. Our authority for the history of Veronica's veil and the portrait St. Luke painted of the Blessed Virgin is the ancient and time honoured tradition respecting them.

It has been our endeavour to portray the historical personages with the utmost possible accuracy. In regard to accessories, and matters of minor importance, as for instance, the statement that Nero was present at St. Peter's death, and the description of Caiaphas' end, the author alone is responsible.

## CHAPTER 1.

### An unexpected Attack.

It was the year 66 after the birth of Christ, and the annual Feast of the Passover was nigh at hand. Every road, every highway in Palestine was thronged with pilgrims, going up to Jerusalem to keep the feast. The road more especially which led from Jericho through the barren mountainous country of Judea, was peopled with endless caravans; for not only did the inhabitants of the valley of the Jordan, and of the district east of the Jordan, journey through Jericho, but the majority of the Galileans, the Jews coming from Neronias, the Libanon, Damascus and Antioch, preferred to wend their way through the valley of the Jordan, rather than take the shorter road through the detested land of Samaria. For several days past company after company might have been seen ascending the steep bridle path, in some places a very narrow one, which conducted over the mountain passes. On they came, in irregular, isolated groups; pedestrians innumerable, a trusty staff firmly grasped in their bronzed hands; closely veiled ladies riding on asses or mules; long strings of camels and dromedaries from Syria or Mesopotamia; riders mounted on mettlesome steeds; and again lowly herdsmen and husbandmen, artisans, traders and wealthy merchants, who contrived to combine business interests with the visit to the temple which the Mosaic law rendered obligatory upon them; besides Pharisees and teachers of the law who delighted to make their piety conspicuous, and travellers of all kinds to be counted by hundreds and thousands, a very exodus of the people.

On the day of which we are speaking, the next but one before the Feast, the road over the hill country was comparatively deserted, although a few groups of stragglers might still be seen, hurrying onward in order to reach the Holy City in due time. The last party of



travellers which had not issued from the gate of Jericho until a somewhat late hour of the morning, was now pressing forward to overtake those who were on in front, but despite their efforts they did not diminish the distance between them. It consisted of two camels and three beasts of burden; on the foremost of the two swift-footed animals rode Rabbi Sadoc and his son Benjamin, a merry little fellow not much more than eight years old. The Rabbi was a very handsome man in the prime of life; his countenance was pale, and a bushy black beard fell onto the caftan he wore, the fine woollen texture of which indicated that its owner had no need to study economy. The Rabbi was a teacher of the law in the principal Jewish synagogue in Antioch, but on the death of his brother, who died without an heir, he had assumed the direction of a very extensive trade in the most costly products of Persia and Hindustan. In fact the goods he was now conveying up to Jerusalem were worth a fortune. But dearer to him than the choice fabrics, the finely-wrought, precious metals of the East, were his son Benjamin and his daughter Thamar. The latter, a fair maiden of sixteen summers, just entering upon womanhood, veiled according to the Jewish custom, was mounted, with her old nurse Sara, on the second riding-camel, which, whenever the road permitted, kept close beside the first. A camel-driver, who had been hired in Jericho, a surly-looking fellow, walked behind the animals.

Benjamin was never tired of addressing question after question either to his father or to the driver. The first eminence was now attained, and the Rabbi pointed out to him in the distance on the left the leaden-coloured expanse of the Dead Sea, surrounded by yellowish-grey rocks, while the boy related with great animation the terrible story of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha, his eyes sparkling as he warmed to his theme.

The Rabbi listened with fatherly pride to the intelligent child, who already gave proof of mental endowments and moral qualities of no ordinary nature. "Can you tell me," he asked him, "of another city which deserves even more than did the accursed Sodom, that

fire and brimstone should be rained down upon it out of heaven?"

"I know what you mean, Father; you mean Rome, which has torn the diadem from Judah's head, as you told us a little while ago in the synagogue. Would that it could be burnt up with fire and brimstone! But I know another city that can never, never be destroyed by enemies, because it is the city of God, and the Lord Himself dwells in her holy temple. Do you know which that is, Thamar?"

"That is not a very difficult riddle to solve, Benjamin," his sister answered with a merry laugh. "You mean Jerusalem, whose turrets and pinnacles we hope to see this very day." Then changing her tone she added gravely: "Yet the holy City and the Temple of the Lord were once devastated and laid waste by the heathen! Is it impossible that a similar fate should again overtake them?"

"May the God of our fathers forbid such a thing," exclaimed the Rabbi. "Because Judah had broken the covenant, and worshipped strange gods, the Lord made use of Sennacherib as His scourge to chastise her. Now, however, both priests and people are zealous in the service of the Most High, and the cultus of idols is unknown. It is true that the Romans, when they made themselves masters of Sion, set up their false deities there. But on them, not on His faithful people will the just God's judgments fall, when at length He sends to us the Son of David, for whom we look, and who will exalt the sceptre of Judah over all the nations. Let us pray that He may come speedily!"

"I do pray for it, every day," cried Benjamin crossing his hands devoutly upon his breast. "The Messiah must come soon, for as you reckoned out quite lately, the time has run out which Daniel prophesied would elapse. How devotedly I will serve Him! If only I were a few years older, so that I could carry a sword and shield! For He will surely come as a valiant warrior and smite the head of the Romans. Yet David fought against Goliath, when he was only a boy —"

"And you imagine you will be another David and lay

the Roman giant low with a sling and stone," said his sister laughing. "What if I were to act the part of a second Judith, and hew the Roman Holofernes' head off his body!"

"You, why you have not pluck enough so much as to kill a pigeon," retorted the boy. "What do you say to that, Father? Fancy our Thamar like Judith!"

Thus for a while the children teased one another and chattered gleefully, until, as the gorge became narrower and the path steeper, the midday sun — although it was early in the year — beating down upon them hotly, besides the cloud of dust raised by the camels' feet rendered conversation impossible. Some weary hours followed for the restless boy. Instead of the palm trees and fertile plains of the valley of the Jordan, which the Spring had already decked with countless gay blossoms, nothing was to be seen but sand, huge boulders, masses of broken rock, bare and naked walls. Only here and there a stunted ilex, dwarfed tamarisk or prickly cactus had struck root in some cleft in the surface of the stone. Down below in the bottom of the Wadi a scanty rivulet threaded its way through the sand, with a faint, mournful murmur, otherwise no sound was to be heard, no sign of life broke the stillness of the silent, barren desert.

Not until evening was approaching did the travellers reach Wadi el Had, through which what is in winter-time a broad stream, but which was then shrunk to a narrow current, flows from Bethania to the Wadi Kelt. The sun's parting rays fell obliquely on the side of the rock as the camels turned to the left and entered this gorge; Benjamin grew more and more impatient; at every turn in the defile he asked if they should not soon come in sight of Jerusalem?

Presently they rounded another point of rock; the sun was just setting behind a wooded eminence which formed a striking contrast to the barren heights whereon the eye had hitherto rested.

"Look, Father," cried the boy, "that must be the Mount of Olives. Shall we see the holy City before nightfall? The sun has gone down, and the mountain looks a long way off still."



"You are right, my boy. That is Mount Olivet, and from the hill to the left of it we shall have our first view of Sion's crown of towers. And as yet we have not reached Bethania, we have not yet got to the spring in the valley! May the Lord forgive you your dilatoriness, Obed, we shall not enter Jerusalem to-day."

The last words were addressed to the camel-driver, who was sauntering along by the side with a careless air. He was a young fellow of powerful build, with a coarse beard and a lowering eye. A half-contemptuous smile hovered about his lips, and before answering, he cast a side look at the thick tamarisk bushes which, growing on each side of the stream, concealed the entrance to a ravine. Then he said: "My lord speaks the truth. We can barely reach the gates of Sion before the day is done. But in the valley beside the brook, there is a hospitable Khan, where our beasts can be put up for the night, and my lord will find accommodation for himself and his family."

"You propose that we should pass the night in a lonely Khan down in the valley, when every one in Jericho warned us that the robber-bands of Ben Gioras rendered the whole of this mountainous country unsafe! Surely we can at least reach Bethania!" the Rabbi Sadoc exclaimed in a tone of displeasure. But his daughter, who had been sitting silently on her saddle, then interposed, saying to her father in Greek, for she imagined the man would not understand that language: "Father, do not trust that fellow. He has intentionally lingered on the way, and wasted a great deal of precious time, in order to cut us off from the great caravan, which by this time must be safe within the walls of Jerusalem. Let us hurry forward; see, the moon has risen, the moon which the Lord has set in the heavens to be a light by night, it is almost full, and when the last rosy tints of day have died out on the mountain tops, its pure white light will surely enable us to find our way at least to Bethania."

"Wisely said, my prudent Tamar," answered the Rabbi, also making use of the Greek tongue, which was in fact at that time the colloquial language of the educated classes. "We will proceed as far as Bethania by moon-

light, although I cannot say that I share your suspicions of Obed. He is slow and awkward, and we ought to have engaged one who did his work better, but he seems to me honest enough." Then turning to the driver, he told him in Aramaic, that he really must make haste, for in any case Bethania must be reached that evening. "We should have been there long ago," he concluded, "if you had done your duty, but through your indolence we started later from Jericho than we should have done, and you have idled away at least two hours on the road."

Obed had perfectly understood all that was said in Greek, and a malicious twitch about the corners of his mouth might have betrayed this, had he not kept his head turned all the time towards the tamarisk bushes on the other side of the valley. And now, whilst he answered the Rabbi with the most submissive manner, he cast sidelong glances at the thicket and the ravine.

"O Master, it was not your servant's fault that the baggage-camels were loaded so slowly this morning, nor was he to blame because the dromedary carrying the rich carpets from Persia and the bales of silk from Hindustan went lame before an hour's march was over. You have rather reason to thank me for having persisted in shifting his load to the shoulders of the other camels, to ease the poor beast, for otherwise he would have broken down altogether. And now, if it is my lord's will that we journey on to Bethania, or even further, in the doubtful light of the moon, his commands shall be obeyed. But the night is no man's friend, they say, and if one of the riding-camels were to stumble and fall, how terribly grieved your servant would be, if you, my lord, your sweet little son or your beautiful daughter, came to any harm."

"The animals seem very sure-footed," the Rabbi answered. "It is not that which I am afraid of. How about the robber-bands of Ben Gioras, which, as I was told in Tiberias and Jericho, make the whole countryside unsafe? Even in my father's time the road from Jericho to Jerusalem had the name of being infested by thieves, and the rogues have multiplied so rapidly in the

last few years, that even the Romans — may the Lord soon send us His Anointed to humble their pride—have been unable to hold these children of Belial in check. Before I left Damascus I was advised to wait for the escort of the Syrian Legate, who was going up to Jerusalem at the head of several cohorts. But I would rather have given up the journey and not been present at the feast, than place my children at the mercy of that wanton soldiery. May God confound them! Besides I counted on keeping up with the great caravan. What is said about Ben Gioras in Jericho?"

"What is said of Simon Ben Gioras, do you ask? Why, the wealthy Sadducees, the friends of Rome, curse him and call him a common brigand-chief. The Romans would crucify him, if they could take him prisoner. But the common people, who hate the stranger, and would fain cast off his yoke, look upon Simon Ben Gioras as a hero, like Simon Machabeus. It is true, Ben Gioras robs, but he only takes the property of others to set his own people free; he puts some to death, but only those who are the enemies of his people, and he never lifts his hand against an Israelite, unless it is one whom the Council of the Brethren<sup>1</sup>) in Jerusalem have pointed out as one to be slain. No; Simon Ben Gioras is no ordinary brigand-chief from the mountains of Moab, he is a lion of the tribe of Judah. He is a son of David, and many regard him as the Lord's anointed, who shall come to exalt His people and make all His foes His footstool."

Rabbi Sadoc listened with astonishment to this speech from the lips of a man who had offered his services as an ordinary camel-driver, and whose ragged appearance and untutored manner seemed to accord with his occupation. But now Obed was transformed; he drew himself up to his full height; his eye, hitherto dull and half-closed, sparkled with a sinister light, and his hand

<sup>1</sup>) The Sicarii (robbers, banditti) constituted a kind of secret society; they slew men who were marked by them as "enemies of the people" in the day-time, in the midst of the city, chiefly on festivals, stabbing them with a short curved knife or poniard, which they concealed under their garments.

(cf. Josephus, Wars of the Jews II, 13, 2.)



grasped the hilt of a short curved knife, or dagger, which was worn in his girdle. And suddenly the disguised robber — for indeed such he was — uttering a peculiar cry, which was answered from the thicket of tamarisks, flung himself on the unsuspecting Rabbi and dragged him to the ground. Holding his dagger to his throat, he exclaimed: "You are one of those marked by the Brethren as an enemy of the people, you must die!"

But at the moment when the assassin dealt his murderous blow, he was himself knocked down, so that he fell bleeding across the body of his victim. It was Benjamin who had come to the rescue. As soon as he saw Obed pull his father from the saddle, the boy sprang down and snatching up a large stone from the wayside in both hands, he struck the murderer as he stooped over the Rabbi with it on the back of the head with all his might. "Father, Father, has he killed you?" the little fellow cried in anguish, as he attempted to drag the bandit, who was apparently stunned, off his father's prostrate form. "Father is dying! Quick, Tamar, help, Father will bleed to death!"

Tamar had likewise slipped down off her camel, and now amid bitter lamentations, she flung herself upon the ground beside her father, who was severely wounded. Tearing her long white veil from her head, she instantly endeavoured to staunch with it the blood that flowed freely from a gaping wound in the Rabbi's throat, calling loudly meanwhile on God for help. But almost before the children fairly realized what had happened, they found themselves surrounded by several ferocious-looking bandits, who had emerged from the thicket, crossed the narrow gorge, and who now laid hands, amid oaths and curses, on the boy and the girl.

"To think that blockhead Obed should let himself be made to bite the dust by this bit of a boy!" exclaimed one of the number, seizing Benjamin's arm in an iron grip. "You shall pay for this, you young viper," he added, and already the bright steel was seen to flash in the moonlight over the poor child's head.

But the leader of the band interposed: "Shame on you Barabbas! When was our avenging sword stained with the

blood of children? Bind him and take him to our camp. And take the maiden there too. This capture will enrich our coffers with at the very least some ten thousand shekels.<sup>1)</sup> What is the use of shrieking for help? No one hears you here, child, but the jackal of the desert. Be quiet, not a hair of your head shall be hurt."

Thamar looked up in terror at the brigand, a stalwart, broad-shouldered man, with hard and rather sensual features. "If you have any human feelings," she entreated, "have pity on the poor child who is kneeling beside his dying father. And if you are a son of Abraham, not an ignorant heathen, have before your eyes the fear of God, for whose law you profess to be zealous."

But Benjamin broke in: "Sister, do not ask anything of this wicked man. Let him kill me, and you too, if he chooses. We shall go to Abraham's bosom, where we shall find our Father again, and he and his comrades will go down to hell, where everlasting flames shall be their reward. Come on, cut off my head and Thamar's as well, for we shall never go with you of our own free will."

The chief of the band laughed aloud. "What a plucky little man," he said. "Come with me, my fine fellow, you shall read the Koran to me on the Sabbath, and preach us a sermon to boot. It might be really useful to us," he concluded with another laugh. Then turning to his men, who in the meantime had taken possession of the booty, he ordered them to make haste and get clear of the spot before any unwelcome guests came that way. "Put Obed on one of the camels, I will ride the other with this damsel; you, Barabbas, may take up the boy before you. Before the moon reaches the meridian we must be where the lonesome ilex stands. But stop, what is that I hear? That is surely the ring of horses' hoofs coming up the valley?"

"Your ears do not deceive you, Master," Barabbas replied. "That is unquestionably the sound of horses'

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<sup>1)</sup> The shekel was a Jewish coin, in value about eight pence (16 cents).

hoofs, and of a goodly number, shod with iron, coming up the ravine. Romans no doubt!"

"May the God of our Fathers blast them! Be quick, we must get to the other side of the bushes with our booty before they come up. Will you hold your tongue, little screech-owl? Another sound and your neck shall be wrung. And you too, daughter of Sadoc, you dare scream for help! By my good sword, the horsemen have heard their cries and are coming up at full speed. Stand by me, comrades! Simon Ben Gioras is not the one to give up his prey, or yield his ground as long as there is a chance for a brave man to conquer. There are only four or five of them to a dozen of us!"

In fact as he spoke a small troop of horsemen were seen emerging from the darkness of the ravine. Their brass helmets, round shields, their leathern breast-plates studded with iron gleamed in the bright moonlight. A young soldier rode first, on a white steed; the gold ornaments on his helmet showed him to be the captain. Raising himself on his stirrups, he called out: "What is the matter? Who calls for help?"

"Pilgrims, who have been overtaken by robbers," Thamar answered in Greek. "But be on your guard, they are lying in wait . . . ." The maiden could not finish her sentence, she was dragged to the ground and a cloth thrust into her mouth. Her brother, however, finished it for her: "There on the right, in the shadow of the rock."

The officer looked in the direction indicated, and gave his men orders to arrest the highwaymen. But a grey-headed Decurion rode up to his side, and said in a whisper: "Do not reckon it is cowardice on old Martius' part, sir, if he counsels you to wait until Pomponius' horsemen come up, before we grapple with this brigand band. In these accursed mountain passes Ben Gioras' footpads have more than once got the better of us. We do not know, what the numbers of the enemy may be."

"A valiant warrior does not care to count his adversaries, Martius. Perhaps, however, you may be right; send a man, or do you yourself ride back down the ravine and bid Pomponius hurry up with his company.



Yet, by Jupiter, the rogues will spare us the trouble of deliberating whether we shall engage them or not; stones and arrows are already whizzing about our heads! No, we will not fly from them; forward then!"

The young officer raised his shield, on which in a moment a number of missiles rung, and with drawn sword charged the robbers. Four of his companions followed his example. But old Martius held in his horse, and shaking his head sagely watched the encounter. "That is being foolhardy," he grumbled to himself. "Horses are useless to us in this god-forsaken defile. The rascals are hiding behind the rocks. There, I was right! One of our men has fallen already! A little more and they will have lost all their good horses and their own lives into the bargain. I had better ride back and fetch our comrades to help."

Martius was about to act on his determination, when he saw the centurion put spurs to his horse, and spring over a mass of rock into the midst of the brigands; two other horsemen did the same. Their swords gleamed as they swung them aloft; three, four of the enemies were cut down, and as many trampled under foot; the others fled to the caverns in the rock, whither cavalry could not follow. Their leader however with a couple of bounds leaped to the spot where Tamar, paralyzed by terror, still knelt by her father's side, watching the course of the *mêlée*. Lifting the girl in his arms, he ran with this light burden towards the tamarisk-bushes, in the shelter of which his Arab charger was standing. "Once in the saddle," he muttered between his teeth, "my gallant steed and I will laugh all the Romans to scorn."

At the sound of his whistle the obedient animal answered with a neigh, and came towards him; his hand was already on the bridle, when Martius grasped him by the shoulder, so that he let the girl drop and turned on his pursuer like a wounded lion at bay. It would have gone ill with the soldier, if the centurion had not come at once to his rescue. Both together they found it no easy matter to disarm and bind the brigand; not until this was done had they leisure to attend to the damsel,

who had fallen fainting on the sandy soil of the Wadi, where this last combat had taken place.

"Poor child!" ejaculated Martius, in a kinder manner than one would have suspected in the veteran warrior, grown grey in the midst of battles. "I really think that devil must have stabbed her, see her dress is soaked with blood."

"No, she is coming to," answered the centurion, who had knelt down and moistened the girl's temples with the water that made a narrow bed for itself in the bottom of the Wadi. "What eyes!" he murmured to himself, as Thamar's lids unclosed for a moment, "they are far larger and more beautiful than my sister's." Then with a kind of timid reverence he stroked the long silky hair from her temples, and raising her head, turned it so that the moonlight showed the perfect oval of her countenance. Again she opened her eyes, and this time consciousness seemed to return. First with bewilderment, then with alarm, she gazed at the young soldier in the bright helmet and glistening armour, who was looking at her with such gentle, friendly eyes. Blushing deeply, she stretched out her hands, as if feeling for the veil which eastern customs required her to draw over her countenance, and a cry of dismay and pain escaped her lips.

"Courage, fair maiden," said the centurion. "You are in good hands. I will take as much care of you as if you were my own dear sister, of whom your eyes remind me. Your assailants are all defeated."

"My Father, alas! is he really dead? and my Brother, have the barbarians killed him too? Oh let me get up, I am quite able to walk. My Father must be over there, lying on the ground where the camels are standing. If we can only save him, help me, do help me!"

Supported by the centurion's arm, Thamar walked with tottering steps to the spot where the wounded man lay weltering in his blood. The bandage his daughter had made with her veil, had partly stopped the bleeding, and the Rabbi was not totally unconscious. He recognized Thamar, but could only utter unintelligible sounds, and soon relapsed into a swoon. Martius, who

in his many campaigns had acquired a little knowledge concerning the treatment of wounds, examined the Rabbi's throat, and then expressed his opinion that the hurt was not fatal, the dagger having apparently severed nothing of serious consequence in the throat itself, but the blow being directed upwards, had reached the uvula and probably injured the root of the tongue. The loss of blood had however been considerable, and it was to be feared that fever would set in.

"That shall be prevented if possible by the use of the best remedies and the advice of the first physicians, as soon as we can take your Father to Jerusalem. To night we must get him to Bethania, and the first thing to-morrow morning, if his condition permits, to Jerusalem," the centurion said, to comfort the disconsolate Thamar.

"And my brother Benjamin, what has become of him?" the girl enquired, in accents of deep distress.

Search was made for the child amongst the bodies of the dead and of the wounded but in vain. The old nurse also had completely disappeared. The centurion was about to give the signal to depart, when a bugle-note sounded in the ravine. It was known to herald the approach of Pomponius, and the little party halted to await the arrival of his company.

"They were at a greater distance than I imagined," said Martius. "It was fortunate for us that the brigands were not more in number, or succour would have come too late. What is to be done with the prisoners?"

"First of all we must put this wounded man on one of the riding-camels. You, Martius, had better hold him in your strong arms. Then he will be more able to bear the motion of the animal, if it is led slowly and carefully. A litter would of course be far preferable, but how could we possibly procure one?"

"You seem very much concerned about this Jew," growled the grey-bearded old warrior. "There is not half as much fuss made about Roman soldiers, who have received honorable wounds on the field of battle. What a wonderful fascination there seems to be in a Jewish

maiden's dark eyes! Well, do as you like, if only you will let me have the chieftain's horse as my share of the spoil."

Before the centurion could reply to this speech, the tribune Pomponius galloped up at the head of a body of cavalry. "A stroke of good luck for you, Lucius Flavus!" he exclaimed laughing to his fellow officer, whose senior he was only by about a year. "You must make an offering to Fortune, comrade! Upon my word, much as I hate and despise the Jewish nation, it must be acknowledged that some of their daughters are remarkably pretty. And what a splendid horse that is which Martius is holding! A thorough-bred Arab. I must see that by daylight to-morrow and purchase it, even if I have to give 10,000 sesterii for it."

"You can settle that with Martius and the others who had the tussle with the bandits, and therefore have the first claim to the booty. This damsel I take under my protection," the centurion replied.

His superior officer and friend again laughed aloud. "What, all aflame already? That is not like you, Lucius. Well, your turn must come too, though you are such a preacher of morals and stoicism. But enough of that; it is time for us to be off. What is to be done with the prisoners, do you ask? There is no good in burdening ourselves with them; they were taken *in flagrante delicto*, run the robbers through. By the river Styx, they may think themselves lucky to have such a fate; if we had taken them to Jerusalem, they would have had a lingering death on the cross."

This order was immediately carried out. But when Martius' lance was levelled at the chief who lay tightly bound upon the ground, the man cried out: "Stop, stop, it is your interest to spare my life. For if you take me into the city alive you will be able to claim a larger reward. I was told that 20,000 sesterii were set upon my head."

"Then you must be the notorious Simon Ben Gioras," Pomponius exclaimed. "But no, it cannot be. The man who defeated our cohorts more than once cannot be such an arrant coward. Turn him round to the moon-

light, so that I may see his face. Yes, it must be he, there is the scar on his cheek and other marks by which he is to be recognized. Comrades, we may count upon 20,000 sesterii! Take good care however, that he does not slip through our hands, for nothing but the hope of escape would have induced him to discover his identity to us.

"Twenty thousand sesterii!"<sup>1)</sup> shouted the soldiers in jubilation. "Twenty thousand sesterii," the tribune repeated, "in addition to a magnificent steed and the fairest of Jewesses! Lucius, you are a spoilt child of Fortune. But now let us move on, we ought to be in Bethania an hour hence. Then the first thing to-morrow morning you can ride into the city and tell the Procurator that Cestius Gallus will be his guest to-morrow evening. I am quite aware that Florus will be highly delighted at the prospect of entertaining so distinguished a visitor: the Procurator of Judea and the Syrian Legate have always been as warmly attached to one another as the proverbial cat and dog. Forward, march!" The high spirited young Roman pressed on to the head of his troop. The centurion rode alternately beside the camel that bore the wounded Rabbi, and beside the one on which his daughter was mounted, saying a few words of comfort or encouragement to them from time to time. Thamar never uttered a word of gratitude; but she prayed fervently for her rescuer to the God of her fathers, and the look in her eyes expressed her feelings towards him far more eloquently than any speeches her tongue could have framed.

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<sup>1)</sup> A roman coin about two pence (4 cents) in value.



## CHAPTER 2.

### In Bethania.

The travellers, with their military escort, reached Bethania before midnight without further misfortune. The cheerful little village was crowded with pilgrims, and as might be expected, there was not a room to be had in the inn. The soldiers, inured as they were to all manner of hardships, thought nothing of bivouacking in the open air, but they were obliged to have provender and water for their horses. So the tribune roused the inhabitants out of their sleep and compelled them to provide what was required for the animals, as well as produce bread and a draught of wine for the hungry soldiers. This they did most reluctantly, for every service done to one of the hated invaders went sorely against the grain of every Jew. Then the horses were picketed, sentries set, a huge fire lighted, and the men, wrapped in their cavalry-cloaks, lay down on the ground for a few hours rest.

But what was to become of the wounded Rabbi and his daughter? Whilst approaching the village, the Centurion Lucius had observed at a short distance from it a spacious farm-house, standing in a large garden, evidently the abode of well-to-do people. Thither he now proceeded leading the two camels, and the other beasts with the baggage. He had not to knock long, before the door was opened by an old woman. With one hand she shaded from the draught the flickering flame of the oil-lamp which she carried in the other, and without waiting to make further inspection of the unexpected intruder, she greeted him with the words: Peace be with you.

Lucius, prepared for an outburst of displeasure or even abuse at this untimely disturbance, was amazed on hearing the friendly salutation. The old woman surely could perceive that he wore the armour of a Roman

soldier, for the moonlight shone brightly on his helmet and coat-of-mail. Taken by surprise he exclaimed: "You must be blind, my good friend! Do you not see you are speaking to a Roman Captain? We are not accustomed to be greeted in such a manner in this country."

"Why should I not wish peace to you and to all of us, although you are a soldier? Peace is the most precious gift of Heaven. But you do not understand that, and this is no time or place to explain it to you. Tell me how I can serve you, Sir, and if it is within my power your wishes shall be complied with."

In broken Aramaic Lucius told his story: how he had been fortunate enough to rescue a Jew and his daughter from the hands of robbers, but not before the man had sustained severe injuries. He therefore begged shelter for them, since he, as a soldier, could do nothing more for them. He especially accentuated the fact that the wounded man was a fellow country man and co-religionist and that he was in a position to make ample remuneration for the hospitality extended to him, for it was apparent that the travellers were wealthy people. Moreover, he added, the beasts laden with merchandise would be surety for the payment of any debts contracted by their owner.

The old woman cut the centurion short, by running back into the house, calling loudly. "Eusebius, Martha, Mary! Make haste, get up and come down directly. Get the guest-chamber ready. Salvation is come to our house; the Lord Himself asks admittance under our roof in the shape of an unfortunate brother who is wounded." Then she came again to the door: "Where is the wounded man? Poor fellow! If you will wait one minute my husband and my two nieces will be here immediately. Is that sweet damsel his daughter? How much you must have suffered, my child! But be of good courage, our Lord will turn all to our good. To those who love God, all things work together for good. Now dismount at once and let me embrace you."

Even if Lucius had been more conversant than he was with Aramaic, he would not have understood the effusive

charity wherewith perfect strangers were thus welcomed. He shook his head doubtfully, and said in Latin to Martius: "I am half afraid we have come to the house of a mad woman; what can that mean, our Lord in the shape of a wounded brother?"

"Never you mind, Centurion," answered the old soldier. "She may be sane or insane for aught I care, if we only get rid of these tiresome Jews. They can manage to get on together somehow."

By this time the house was seen to be astir. Two girls with oil-lamps appeared in the hall, with pleasant, prepossessing faces, innocence and sincerity looking out of their clear eyes. They went up to Thamar, testifying the compassion they felt for her more by the kind, sympathizing manner in which they looked at her than by what they said to her. But Thamar's whole attention was rivetted upon her father, whom the centurion was lifting down from the camel in his strong arms. She supported his head and thus he was carried into the guest-chamber, on the threshold of which they were met by a fine looking old man, with a gentle, benevolent expression of countenance.

"The Lord bless your coming in, and grant you His peace!" such was the greeting wherewith he received them, uttered in accents which went to the heart as they came from the heart. "Now, my good friend where do you feel pain? Ah, I see you cannot speak; your tongue is hurt and swollen, and oh, what a sad cut we have here! Do not be alarmed, please God, that will be healed before long. Let me feel your pulse—it is very weak—you have lost a great deal of blood; but time and good nursing will set that right again. Keep up your courage, and above all do not excite yourself. You are in good hands; thank God for that, and also thank this kind officer, who saved your life. Now Miriam, Martha, bring me water and towels and a sponge, and my little medicine chest, for we must wash the wound well and put on fresh bandages."

The girls slipped away to fetch what was wanted. Thamar meanwhile knelt by her father's side, stroking his hand, smiling amid her tears and whispering words

of encouragement; on the other side of the couch the Centurion knelt, supporting the wounded man, while their host cautiously examined the gaping cut. Lucius had doffed his helmet, and thrown off his mantle. Golden hair in crisp curls, not clipped as closely as was usual amongst the Roman soldiery, fell on his broad, low forehead, and his blue eyes gazed with profound sympathy on the girl opposite to him as well as on the wounded man, whose countenance, pale as death, and contracted by pain, was turned towards his daughter.

The bystanders perceived that the Rabbi was desirous to say something, and that his inability to make himself understood was most distressing to him. Finding his signs were not interpreted aright, he began to get excited, until Salome, at her husband's suggestion, fetched a wax tablet and style. The Rabbi took it eagerly and tracing the word "Benjamin," gave it to his daughter. She burst afresh into tears, and told her father that during the fight with the brigands, her brother and the old nurse had disappeared, and no trace had been found of them. On hearing this, the Rabbi's features showed how deep was the grief the intelligence caused him.

The Centurion, with a view to relieve his anxiety in some measure, said: "The boy has not been killed, or we should have been certain to discover his body. Either he made his escape, or he was forcibly carried off by the brigands, in the hope of obtaining a ransom for him. To-morrow I will request the Tribune to send a troop to scour the country again; let us hope that by this means we shall find your son."

Rabbi Sadoc looked gratefully at the officer. Thamar devined what he would fain have said, and spoke for him, a rosy blush mantling her cheek. "My Father desires to thank you, noble Sir, permit me to do so in his place. This fresh act of kindness on your part will put the climax to the obligations you have already conferred on us, and for which we can never be sufficiently grateful; Benjamin is my only brother, and the apple of my Father's eye. If you could bring him back to us, I really think he would be almost well again. There is no

doubt that the robbers carried off the child for the sake of a ransom, and a considerable one too, for they are well aware that my Father is a wealthy man. Benjamin would not have run away, he is too brave for that, and too fond of my Father and of me."

The wounded man expressed by signs his assent to all that his daughter said. Then he wrote on the tablets: "Many thanks. Whoever brings me back my boy shall be richly rewarded. I am prepared to pay any ransom, the largest sum I can raise—from two to three talents of silver,<sup>1)</sup> if need be."

While Lucius read these words, which were written in Greek—and read them not without astonishment at the opulence to which they testified, Sadoc drew from his pocket a leathern purse containing several gold coins, and making a sign to Martius, who till then had stood in a corner of the room, a silent spectator of what went on, to approach the bed, he put a gold denar—a coin of about the value of £1 sterling—into his hand. The old soldier could understand that language although hitherto he had not comprehended a word that was said; with a smile of satisfaction he pocketed the money saying: "That will be of some use to me. It is a long time since I had as much in my purse. That is to repay me for my trouble in carrying the Jew in my arms all the way to this place. I was not created for a sick nurse! Our Centurion however seems to have a taste for that sort of thing, though he bears himself gallantly in the field. Well, well, women have made Hercules himself sit and spin before now," he added to himself in an undertone.

The Rabbi next turned to the Centurion with an enquiring look, as if he would ask him in what way he could recompense the services he had rendered him. The young man guessed what he wished to say, and answered with a smile: "There is nothing to say about that. It was a pleasure to me to do what I could for you and your daughter." Sadoc glanced at Tamar and noticed how her colour heightened at these words, and the look that accompanied them. He knitted his brows,

<sup>1)</sup> The attic talent, of silver was equivalent in value to about £235; the talent of gold was nearly ten times as much.



and after a moment's hesitation caught up the tablets and wrote: "You are welcome to take half the merchandise which you were the means of saving, or if you prefer it, mention the sum that I may venture to offer you — but I must beg that you will not disturb my daughter's peace of mind."

The young Roman flushed crimson, and he exclaimed: "Have I shown any wish for your property or the least portion of your wealth? Have I said a word to your daughter — but what am I thinking of to quarrel with a sick man. Forgive my bad temper, and now let me bid you farewell. I leave you in excellent hands, and it is high time that my companion and I rejoin our comrades. Farewell, and may the gods hasten your recovery."

So saying the Centurion put on his helmet, bowed politely to all present and quitted the room. But before he crossed the threshold Thamar hastened after him, and laid a detaining hand upon his arm. "O sir," she said in a deprecating tone, "do not leave us in anger! What-ever did Father write on that wretched tablet to make you colour so? I am sure he had no intention of displeasing you, he is hardly master of himself, just consider the circumstances in which he is!"

"Enough, enough," Lucius answered. "For your sake I will forgive him for having attributed to me ulterior designs." Then taking her hand, he raised it to his lips and added: "You remind me so much of my dear sister Lucilla, far away in my own country, only her hair and eyes are of a different colour to yours."

"She is indeed to be envied for having so good a brother. No doubt her hair and eyes are like yours." Thamar replied. Then putting her hands to her throat she unclasped a valuable necklace of large brilliant rubies, fastened by a sapphire of great beauty, and entreated him to take it for his sister. "Take it," she said, "not in the least as a reward, but as a remembrance of the kind action you have performed today. Pray do not distress me, by refusing it! The little trinket is quite my own, to dispose of as I please. I have plenty of these pretty baubles and I should be delighted to think

that it had given pleasure to your sister, or your bride, if you have one. Do take it, please do!"

"I shall value it highly as a souvenir of you, fair maiden! I hope soon to bring you tidings of your little brother's safety, or better still, bring him back to you himself. But before I go, you must tell me your own and your Father's name."

"I am called Thamar," the girl answered with a blush. "I am the daughter of Rabbi Sadoc, we come from Antioch."

"Thamar! That is a pretty name. Does it not mean a palm? The palm is, you know, the emblem of victory. I shall never forget you or your name. Farewell; think of me sometimes!"

"I shall remember you in my prayers," the damsel replied in accents of deep emotion; and raising her eyes to the starry heavens, she ejaculated: "O God of my fathers, bestow Thy richest blessing on this stranger, and may his heart, so good and noble, come to the knowledge of the truth and the grace Thou hast promised to Thy chosen people."

When Thamar resumed her place beside her father's couch, she found that fresh bandages were laid on, and Eusebius was trying to persuade his patient to swallow a soothing draught. "If you do not keep quiet," he said, "we cannot keep the fever under." But Sadoc refused to take the potion until he had made arrangements with his host about some matter of importance.

For the sake of setting his mind at rest, Eusebius made a sign to his wife and the two maids to leave him alone with the Rabbi and his daughter. Thereupon Sadoc, making use of the tablets, enquired first of all whether his entertainer was really and truly a Jew. Eusebius answered that he was one of the tribe of Ephraim. Then the Rabbi desired him to swear by the God of Abraham that he would fulfil his wishes, holding them as sacred as those of a dying man. His host answered him that he would promise to do so, but begged to be excused taking an oath, as he did not consider it right, except in cases of absolute necessity, to call God solemnly to witness. The Rabbi gave a search-

ing look at the old man, and apparently satisfied by his upright and venerable appearance that he was a man of honour, he dispensed with anything more than a promise; then he produced from beneath his robe two bags, a larger one containing gold, and a smaller one filled with jewels, which he valued at about fifty talents (some £11,750—\$58,750). He directed his daughter to fasten the strings of both the bags with wax, and seal them with the signet-ring he wore; this being done, he gave them into the safekeeping of his host, with the following instructions. In case of his death they were to be delivered over to Eleazar, the son of Ananus and grandson of the High-Priest Caiaphas, together with his daughter. For Thamar had been betrothed to the grandson of Caiaphas, and he was on his way to Jerusalem with the object of handing over the damsel herself to her future husband, with her dowry, which was contained in these bags, and of which the freight of valuable goods carried by the camels also formed a part. All that he possessed besides, whether money, jewels, goods, houses and other property at Antioch, he bequeathed to his son Benjamin, whose guardian he constituted the aforementioned Eleazar; not unless uncontrovertible proof of the boy's death were forthcoming was the property to go to Thamar. All this he wrote down, not on the waxen tablets, but on a papyrus leaf; it was duly signed and sealed, Eusebius appending his signature to it as a witness. When all was finished, he swallowed the medicine and sank back on his pillow with a sigh of relief. He pressed Thamar's hand, and that of his host, and soon fell asleep under the influence of the composing draught.

Eusebius felt the pulse of the sleeper, and gave a nod of satisfaction. "I hope the inflammation will not be much," he said to Thamar, "rest is the main requisite. And you too, my Daughter, need sleep more than anything; come with me, and Salome shall show you to your room. The day will dawn soon, but we will arrange the curtains before your window so that the light shall not prevent you from taking the rest you want. There is no occasion for you to be anxious about your father; Salome and I will look well after him. Besides, he will probably not wake before midday."

In vain Thamar entreated to be allowed to remain with her father. The old man smiled and said he was somewhat of a tyrant in his own house, and exacted obedience from every one under his roof. He took the girl, who made no further resistance to his will, by the hand, and led her to the foot of a flight of stairs. Whilst ascending these he asked her: "So you are already betrothed, my Daughter! Are you well acquainted with Eleazar and his house? I knew his grandfather who was the High-Priest some thirty years ago, very well indeed." As he uttered these words, a shade of pain and regret passed over the countenance of the old man.

The melancholy expression did not escape Thamar's notice, and she rejoined: "The remembrance of the High-Priest seems to be a sorrowful one for you. I know nothing of his grandson, to whom my Father has promised me in marriage, nor is my Father acquainted with him personally. His uncle, the High-Priest Ezechias, was with us, and he asked for my hand for him. Father says that Eleazar is chief Captain of the Temple-guard, and the scion of a good family, one of the first of the tribe of Levi. As I belong to the same tribe and the law requires that I should be espoused to a member of no other, Father promised me to him."

"It is quite true that his family is one of the most distinguished in Jerusalem, and his house is like the palace of a prince. But there is Salome waiting for us. Take our guest to her chamber at once, wife, and may God and His holy Angels watch over you, my child."

Thamar began to express her grateful thanks to him, but he would not listen to them, and with a friendly nod went to his own room. As soon as the door had closed behind him, his countenance assumed a look of profound grief.

"Poor child!" he said to himself. "So beautiful, so good, so pure! Are you really to marry the grandson of the unhappy Caiaphas, on whose house the wrath of God most evidently rests? And that man Eleazar was mentioned to me quite lately by one of our deacons as the leader of the party of Zealots, who are leaving no stone unturned to incite our nation to enter into hostile-

ities with Rome. I almost think he will gain his end, and then!—Poor child, for you there are certainly breakers ahead. May our Lord Jesus Christ protect you from harm!" And for some time before he lay down to rest, Eusebius knelt in prayer with arms extended.

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## CHAPTER 3.

### Beneath the lone Ilex-tree.

As soon as the centurion Lucius appeared on the scene, and attacked the robbers with his little band of horsemen, Barabbas caught up Benjamin in his arms, and ran off with him into the thicket. "Hold your tongue, or I will strangle you," he said to him. But the boy only screamed the louder, and struggled violently to get free. "If our Captain had not so emphatically ordered us to bring you alive to the camp, young rascal, I should silence your noise for ever, in a very simple way. But as it is, I must give myself more trouble with you," continued the bandit, as he stuffed a lump of earth into the child's mouth, tied together his hands and his feet, and took him under his arm like a log of wood. He then ascended the hill as fast as he could, listening attentively meanwhile to the sounds that reached his ear of the conflict going on in the ravine below. "If our men get the best of it," he muttered, "I must make haste back to them, so as to have my share in the fight and my portion of the plunder. But if they take to flight, they cannot reproach me for doing the same."

On reaching the summit of the knoll he was able to catch a glimpse of the moon-lit ravine. He could clearly distinguish the bright gleam of the armour the Roman soldiers wore, but not a sound could he hear.

"By the sword of my fathers, those Roman vultures are getting the victory again over the lion of Judah! And you seem to be the only prize we shall carry off, little son of Sadoc. Not so, here come some of our comrades bringing with them, apparently, your fair sister, whom Ben Gioras valued at the sum of ten thousand shekels. Hullo, you fellows, have you not laid hands on any of the valuables wherewith the camels of this rich Rabbi were laden? And what has become of our Captain?"

"I am afraid he has fallen into the hands of the Romans, whom may God destroy," replied one of the men with an oath.

"It will cost our Brethren no small sum of money, if they do not want to see him crucified at the Pasch," growled another. "For if the Governor has set a reward of twenty thousand sesterii on his head, he knows that he can demand ten times the amount from us as his ransom. He will not release him for less than four talents, take my word for it! That Gessius Florus is the greatest rogue on the face of the earth!"

"People say that his master, the Emperor Nero, for whom our High-Priest offers sacrifice in the temple, is a far worse sinner than he," interposed a third. "For the matter of that, I wonder whether Ananus and the others will buy off Ben Gioras for ten talents. Your worthy father got off much more cheaply under Pontius Pilate, Barabbas."

"Yes, all the people of Israel begged for his release. And if our High-Priest had to choose between Ben Gioras and a man they hated as they hated Jesus of Nazareth, who cast in their teeth that they had made the temple a den of robbers, by the sword of my fathers, I am pretty sure that they would have our Captain set at liberty. But what had we better do now? I have got the Rabbi's little son safe and sound, as the Captain desired, and you have got his daughter?"

"Not his daughter, I am sorry to say; apparently only an old maid-servant, who seems your equal in courage, Barabbas, for she took to her heels as soon as Obed attacked her master. We caught her though, and we can perhaps send her with a message to Ananus. But do give that poor child a little air, he cannot breathe."

Barabbas tried to vindicate his reputation for courage, while he unfastened Benjamin's bonds. The bandits then decided to repair to the accustomed rendezvous at the solitary ilex-tree, and there to discuss future operations. It was agreed that one of their number should follow the Roman soldiers to spy out their movements, to see where they bestowed the booty they had seized, and what became of the wounded Rabbi and his

daughter. A young man named Zaleh, whom no one would have taken for a brigand from his appearance, an acute fellow, was told off for this service.

The other *sicarii*, (for they belonged to the so-called notorious band of robbers), who had been joined by a few more of their number, then started on their way to the place of meeting assigned by their chief. For many weary hours they trudged on along the rocky path, sometimes ascending, sometimes descending. A rope had been fastened round Benjamin's waist, the other end being attached to Barabbas' belt, and he was compelled to run by the side of the brigands. He tried hard to conceal the pain this caused him, and only thought how he could find an opportunity to escape. But he had long since lost his bearings, and he no longer knew in which direction lay Jerusalem, whither he had desired to turn his steps. The poor child grew more and more tired, and scarcely knew how to keep up with the robbers; besides the hoarse cry of the jackals in the valleys filled him with alarm. Yet he looked across at Sara, who panting and half-crying, was being hurried along at a little distance, and endeavoured to encourage her, saying: "You need not be afraid of the jackals, Sara, they will not venture to attack so large a party. If I was alone now, I dare say they would tear me to pieces. But do you not think that if I prayed God, He would send His Angel to shut their jaws, as He did the lions at Babylon?"

"No doubt the Lord God would send His Angel at the sound of your voice, Benjamin, for you are without sin in His sight. But what will become of me, at the mercy of these sons of Belial, who slew my good master," moaned the old woman in her distress.

"Do you really think Father was killed? I thought I saw his eyes move and his hands, when I was trying to get that wicked Obed off him. Oh I do hope his wound will not be fatal! But now, you know, he has fallen into the hands of the Romans, it will go worse with him than with us, for bad as these robbers are, they are at any rate sons of Abraham and not pagans. Alas! poor Father and dear Thamar, how I wish I could do something for them!"

The moon was still high in the heavens when at length the crest of a barren mountain ridge was reached, on the highest point of which, on the edge of a precipitous declivity the ancient oak stood, whither they were wending their steps. This spot might be called the watch-tower of the desert where our Lord abode during his forty days fast, and whither a century later numerous anchorites retired after His example. At the time of which we are now speaking, the caverns and cliffs of the rocks served as hiding-places for the numerous bands of banditti who under the pretext of keeping the Romans at bay, devastated the whole of Palestine and the adjoining lands, choosing this locality for their headquarters. Bonfires by night on these heights or columns of smoke by day, were visible over all the mountainous country around, as far as the shores of the Dead Sea to the south, and the hills of Galilee to the north, and served as a concerted signal to call together the scattered bands, or otherwise direct their movements.

Benjamin was tired to death, when a halt was finally made beneath the gnarled and weather-beaten tree. A sentinel stepped out of the hollow trunk; after a few words had been exchanged between him and his comrades, he took the boy up in his arms and carried him down some steps hewn in the solid rock, forming the entrance to a cave, in a corner of which he laid him down on a bundle of hay. Turning to the old woman, who had followed him trembling, he told her that she could make a bed for herself where she chose; and after warning them both that any attempt to escape would cost them their lives, but otherwise they had nothing to fear, he left them alone.

"Let us say our night prayers together at once," the boy said to the old nurse, "and then Sara, mind if you cannot sleep—you always say old people do not sleep like young ones—keep your ears open and try to overhear what these wicked men mean to do with us. But look, what is that? Do you not see the reflection of a fire? Wait, let me creep up the steps and see what they are about—"

"For Heaven's sake, child, pray do nothing of the

sort! You will turn giddy and fall down the precipice, or the brigands will perceive you and put you to death—”

But the good woman's caution was wasted. Benjamin was already out of the cave, creeping on hands and knees up the steps. Concealed in the shadow of the rock, he got a view of the whole mountain-top. A large fire was blazing at a short distance from the old ilex. He was astonished to see how many armed men had assembled round it in the short space of time, and more and more continued to come up from the ravines on all sides. These brigands evidently had their principal camp in the immediate neighborhood. And while Benjamin looked, other fires blazed up on the peaks around, at an ever-increasing distance. Were reinforcements expected from so far away? It would take them hours to get there, Benjamin thought. Presently he noticed that three or four men, detaching themselves from the others, came and stretched themselves on the ground close to the ilex, not more than a few paces from where he was crouching. He heard one say to his comrades:

“Nothing more unfortunate could have happened than this unsuccessful raid on the part of our Captain. I cannot conceive why he set his heart upon taking this Rabbi and his children captive. He must have had reason to believe that they had a great treasure with them.”

“As far as I know,” answered one of the other men, “this daughter of Sadoc's is betrothed to Eleazar, the Captain of the temple, the son of Ben Caiaphas, who is the leader of the seditious faction. Ben Gioras cannot forgive the old man for getting elected to the post instead of himself; and I believe his son Eleazar has been the means of causing him an humiliation more than once. For that reason he wanted to carry off his bride and her ample dowry; at least that is what I think about it.”

“You are quite mistaken, my good fellow,” interposed a third; “Ben Gioras and Ananus play into each other's hands; one devil does not drive out the other. The real object at which they are aiming is that Ananus, now that hostilities may at any day break out with the



Romans, should obtain possession not only of the rich marriage-portion Sadoc's daughter will bring to her husband—about the girl herself he seems to care very little—but also of the whole of the vast fortune of the Sadducee himself, which amounts to more than a hundred talents.”

“A hundred talents!” the others echoed.

“A hundred at the very least; probably a hundred and fifty, or even two hundred. Half of the amount was to go into the coffers of our union, and of that a good part would naturally find its way into Ben Gioras' pocket. That was why he wanted to conduct the little business in person. It seemed to present no great difficulty when once he had contrived to get his confederate, Obed, engaged as the Rabbi's camel driver. So he only took two or three fools with him whom he thought would not know what a fine fish they had caught in their net. No one could foresee that the Roman troops would come up and spoil the game. Well, the Captain's designs have miscarried, and he himself is caught in the trap. Eleazar will be baulked of his bride's marriage portion, for it is not probable that the Romans will let the prize go out of their grasp. And if the officer who was so lucky as to seize it, should be so silly as to restore the property to the owners, the Governor would take the young lady under his gracious protection, and Eleazar would be disappointed of his betrothed,—not that that would be much grief to him—and of her dowry, valued at about fifty talents, a sum to the loss of which neither he nor his father would be exactly indifferent.”

“But what is to be done with the lad whom we have captured? Did not Ananus give orders that he was to be despatched to Abraham's bosom?”

“Very possibly Ananus and Eleazar wish him there with all their heart, for on his death his sister will inherit the whole of her father's immense wealth. But Ben Gioras has doubtless considered the matter well, and concluded that it would be more to his advantage to keep him here in our camp, as a sort of hostage. At any rate he stopped Barabbas when he was going to kill the boy. And now we can demand of Eleazar and

Ananus the release of our Captain out of the hands of the Romans as the first condition for the surrender or death of the boy. Of course we should make other conditions, but we must think them over and hear what the other leaders have to say, who have been summoned to a consultation by our beacon-fires.—But what is that moving close to the edge of the rock? Hullo, I have caught you!”

While Sheik Mardoch was speaking he had several times thought something was astir on the rocky steps; now an unwary movement on Benjamin's part revealed his presence. He was at once firmly gripped by the Bedouin chief's strong hand and dragged into the circle of firelight, where he encountered glances from those who were sitting around calculated to inspire even a brave man with terror.

“Playing the eaves-dropper, were you, young man?” the Sheik inquired with flashing eyes. “Now tell me how much you understood of our conversation. Mind you speak the truth to me, or you may perhaps go down straight to hell with a lie on your lips.”

“I never told a lie, Sir,” Benjamin replied almost with an offended air. “And if you reckon it as a sin to play the eaves-dropper, I did not know it was wrong to listen in order to find out what my enemies meant to do.”

“Well there is some justice in that, although I do not choose that you should do so. I like your courage, my boy; now tell me straight out what you overheard us say.”

“I heard you say that Eleazar who is to marry my dear sister, is a bad man, the ally of robbers and murderers,” the boy answered in a tone of indignation.

“By my Father's beard! That is what I call plain speaking. Robbers and murderers! If you fellows have hitherto imagined yourselves to be the avengers of your people, the champions of their liberty, this young gentleman will teach you your mistake. And pray what steps do you intend to take now, since you have become convinced of the undesirable character of your future brother-in-law?”

“What can I do for my Sister, so long as I am in your power?” the boy replied, with tears in his eyes.

"And if you could get away from us, what then?"

"Then I would find out where she is, and my Father, if he is still alive, and I would warn my Sister to have nothing to do with that man."

"Not a bad idea. But we will take good care that you do not slip through our fingers. We must bind you with cords, unless you will solemnly promise me to make no attempt at escape."

"I can never promise that," the boy answered.

"Well, I would have taken your word," Sheik Mar-doch said.

"Now I must have your hands tied behind your back, and that will hurt you very much; but it is your own doing."

While Benjamin's hands were being bound, he again addressed the Sheik, whom he seemed to trust, asking timidly: "Shall you really put me to death, if that bad Eleazar, or his father, wishes you to? I should so much like to see the temple and the holy city before I die!"

"If that is your only wish, it may perhaps be fulfilled," said the Bedouin chieftain, whose liking for the lad seemed to increase; his frank, open manner and the courage he evinced delighted the Son of the desert. "But confess, you have only expressed this wish because you think you might find the means of escape, if I let you see the temple and the holy city from the Mount of Olives."

"No, such an idea never came into my mind. And if I really am to die, take me to the Mount of Olives, and kill me there, while I say my prayers looking towards the holy temple."

"You need not alarm yourself about dying at present. And by the memory of my forefathers, the Captain of the Templeguard shall pay a high price for your head, if he insists on your death!"

Then a sudden thought struck Benjamin. "A high price?" he exclaimed. "Do you not think my Father would be willing to pay a still higher price? Send our old nurse to him to tell him what you demand, and he will give it to you, if he possibly can, for he is very fond of me." And to himself he said; "Sara will be

able to warn Father and Thamar against having anything to do with that wicked Eleazar."

"There now!" cried the Sheik. "You are knowing as you are brave."

"The suggestion is not to be despised," said one of the other leaders, who till then had listened in silence to what had passed. "Two purchasers always make the price of anything go up, and we can see who finally makes the highest bid."

The third chieftain signified his assent to the proposal, but observed that they had better do nothing until Zaleh, who had been sent to report upon the movements of the Roman soldiery, should come back. Besides the Rabbi might be dead by that time. In any case the first step to take was to procure Ben Gioras' release through Ananus' negotiations with the Roman Governor.

Then the Sheik asked Benjamin: "In case your Father should really be dead,—do not begin to cry, I believe him to be still alive—with whom are we to treat in this matter of ransom?"

"With Thamar, my Sister."

"She is not of age in the eye of the law. Her guardian must act for her. Who is her guardian?" You do not know? I have no doubt she would promise us any amount of gold, but her promises, unless ratified by her guardian would not be worth a gera.<sup>1</sup>)

"But Father had two leathern bags on his person; one is full of pieces of gold, and the other is full of precious stones of the very highest value. I heard Father say a single one of them was worth a fortune. Now if Thamar gave you one of those jewels, or even all the whole bagful as well as the purse containing the gold as the price of my life—and I am quite sure she would—what would it matter to you if our guardian scolded Thamar and me afterwards?"

The three brigand-chiefs looked at one another with flashing eyes. Presently the Sheik said: "If no one else has in the meantime taken a fancy to the gold and the jewels, and the stones are in fact as valuable as is supposed, and your Sister would really give them up to

<sup>1</sup>) A Jewish coin, worth about a penny. (2 cents).

us, we might see what could be done. But now it is time for you to go to sleep." With these words Mar-doch took the boy up in his arms, and carried him back into the cavern, giving one of his followers strict orders to keep watch over the two captives. Wrapped in his flowing white burnouse, the Bedouin seated himself, after the manner of his tribe, on the ground beneath the narrow entrance to the cave, thus effectually preventing egress or ingress.

Sara had awaited Benjamin's return with the greatest anxiety, and she now overwhelmed him with caresses and reproaches. When she learnt what the boy had overheard, and what had been said to him, she hardly knew how to control herself, for the good old soul was not wanting in fidelity, sadly deficient though she was in courage. Exclamations of alarm at Thamar's position, of indignation, of detestation of the wretch to whom her darling mistress was betrothed, mingled with tears on account of the misfortune that had befallen her master, and the unhappy fate that threatened to overtake Benjamin, were combined with prayers for their ultimate safety, and many futile lamentations. "And I shall be their next victim!" she said at last with a sob.

"Heaven forbid," the boy replied. "What would they gain by your death? Now just be quiet and listen to what I have to say. It is my opinion that they will send you tomorrow either to Father or to Thamar, to make enquiries about the two leathern purses, which they will demand as my ransom. Be sure you do not forget one thing: Tell Father and Thamar what bad men Eleazar and his Father are. If I only could save Thamar. Give her a kiss from me, and bid her not trouble herself about me. Now mind you tell them the truth about Eleazar; you will not forget, will you?"

"Never fear, I will paint him in true colors. If he were here, I could not keep my hands off him."

"I believe you would be capable of giving him a dressing, Sara, unless you got into a fright as you did when we were attacked last evening," said the boy goodnaturedly. The old woman began a long-winded excuse of her weakness, for which she said she should blush to

her dying day. Benjamin consoled her by saying no one would expect heroic courage from her. "Now let us go to sleep under the protection of the Most High," he concluded. "Look, the brigands have put a sentinel before the cave, and in the moonlight his white cloak gives him the appearance of an angel sent by God to guard us. "He hath given His Angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways."

While Benjamin repeated to himself in an undertone the beautiful verses of the ninetyeth psalm, which his Father had taught him, he fell peacefully asleep, and in his dreams thought he saw beside him the holy Angels, who doubtless kept watch unseen over the sleeping child.

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## CHAPTER 4.

### A Dispute at the Temple-Gate

The first rays of the morning light saw Lucius again in the saddle, trotting, accompanied by a few horsemen, along the road that led over the mountain ridge to Jerusalem. As he rode by, he cast his eyes in the direction of the stately country house, whither, only a few hours before, he had conducted Sadoc and his daughter. By day the homestead showed signs of greater opulence in its owners than when viewed by night; he was surprised to see the large, well-kept gardens with inviting arbours and shady walks, the like of which he had till then not seen in Palestine. He looked at the dwelling-house, but as yet the inmates were not astir.

"Of course," he said to himself, "how foolish of me to expect that the sweet child would be up and about after such a night as the last. May the god of sleep keep the eyelids of the fair damsel closed for some time yet, and send pleasant dreams to dispel her anxiety on account of her father and brother. I wonder whether she ever thinks of me?"

This idea had no sooner crossed Lucius' mind than he sought to banish it. "Away with such nonsense," he said drawing his horse's bridle somewhat tighter. "Lucius, you fool, how could you take for your consort a daughter of this despised race? She would be a fetter, a drag on your wheels, an impediment in the way of military renown, of promotion to the highest posts. First tribune, then legate, and then, if the god of Victory smiles on me, the triumph of a successful general may fall to my share. It will be time enough for me to think of selecting a bride from among the fairest, the wealthiest ladies of Rome when the laurel wreaths my brow. And yet this little Jewess, who reminds me so much of my sister Lucilla, is quite capable of leading a Roman Centurion captive. Take care, Lucius, take care!"

At that moment the officer caught sight of a gardener on the other side of the fence, who had come early to his work. Desirous to obtain some information concerning the inmates of the house, so unlike any people he had hitherto met with, who on the preceding night had received the wounded traveller with so cordial and kind a welcome, he called to the man: "Hullo, you there, your master's name is Eusebius, is it not?"

The gardener looked up. "Yes, that is the steward's name," he replied, and with a respectful bow he went on with his digging without another word.

"So Eusebius is only the steward of this beautiful estate, the finest I have yet seen in this country. Cannot you tell me the name of the proprietor?"

"About thirty or forty years ago the property belonged to a man named Lazarus, and his two sisters. If you were not a stranger in these parts, you would have heard the singular story of what happened here; it was the talk of all the country-side. Did you really never hear how Lazarus was raised to life again, after he had been dead and actually buried for four days?"

"Keep your Jewish fables for other ears than mine," the Centurion rejoined with an incredulous smile. "I have not time to listen to them now. Besides I did not ask you to whom the property belonged in the past generation, but who was its present owner?"

"That I cannot say. It was the steward who took me on here, and he pays me my wages, and I trouble my head about nothing more." So saying the gardener took up his spade again and began breaking up the clods of earth with great energy.

The Centurion rode on, and soon he and his troops reached the ridge of the hill between the Mount of Olives and the Mount of Offence; when he arrived at the spot where the road turns to the right, leading down to the valley of Cedron, the city of Jerusalem lay before him in full view. Involuntarily he stopped his horse, and a loud exclamation of astonishment and admiration escaped his lips.

Over against him, on the summit of the rocky walls and almost perpendicular declivities of the Vale of

Cedron, rose the eastern portion of the wall of enclosure surrounding the temple, with its pinnacles and turrets, resembling the breast-work of a mighty fortress; whilst above it, standing out against the azure sky, were the lofty marble walls of dazzling whiteness forming the inner courts of the temple, and finally the door-posts, the columns, the golden roofs of the sanctuary itself. Never before in his life had Lucius beheld a grander spectacle. The golden palace which Nero had recently erected in Rome, and some other buildings on the banks of the Tiber might perhaps be more gorgeous, the Acropolis of Athens, the Grecian temple, might be more severely artistic in design, but the temple of Jerusalem, so unlike anything else, with its massive marble walls, its glittering roofs of golden plates, surpassed all else in grandeur and magnificence. And at the moment of which we speak, as the sun rose above Mount Olivet, its bright rays lighting up each gleaming pinnacle, the dazzling brilliance of the spectacle was more than the human eye could bear to gaze upon.

"That is certainly a dwelling-place worthy of a God!" exclaimed the enraptured Centurion.

"So one would think," rejoined the Decurion Martius. "But the absurdity of it is that there is said to be no god at all in it; not Jupiter or Juno or Mars or any of the Olympian deities. In fact, the Jews will not tolerate the image of a divinity anywhere at all in the town. There was a fine uproar when one of our Governors set up the colours of the troops on the market-place. The standards with the Imperial eagle or the Emperor's portrait had to be taken away. Upon my word, the obstinate fools ought not to have been given in to; I tell you Gessius Florus would sooner have pulled down their houses about their ears, than allowed the standards to be put outside the gates. What a shame it is too that none of us Romans are permitted to set foot within the precincts of the temple, not so much as to go into the Women's court. Pompey went in however, when he took the city and the temple, and it was from him that we learnt that not even in the innermost part of the sanctuary is the image of a god to be seen. So these

blockheads of Jews, instead of sacrificing their oxen and lambs at the foot of some beautiful statue of one of the gods, immolate them for nothing and to nothing but empty space."

"You do not understand the matter, Martius. The God of the Jews is believed to be an immaterial and invisible being, who cannot therefore be represented by the brush of the artist. Certainly it is difficult to imagine a purely spiritual being. The idea we form of our gods is that they are more like men, and feed upon nectar and ambrosial eates. But what am I doing, talking philosophy to you! Tell me, is that tower in the corner, which with its solid walls and towers seems to bid defiance to the world, the fortress of Antonia?"

"That is the one, Sir, and a stronger was never seen. It is well for us that we have got it in our hands, for if we had to take it by storm, many a brave Roman would be laid low at its foot. Not that I consider it impregnable, it would be quite possible for a few of our legions to conquer it. There is nothing that Roman soldiers cannot achieve."

"And what are the three majestic towers on the farther side by the town wall, overtopping a splendid palace?"

"That is the ancient palace of the Herods. We have to go thither, for it is there that Gessius Florus resides. The present king, a grandson or great-grandson of the one who built that fine palace for himself, has to put up with a far humbler residence. You cannot see it from here, the temple-buildings hide it from view. The three magnificent towers are called Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne. You will open your eyes when you see the immense blocks used in their construction, the thickness of the walls, and the giddy height they attain. No shot from the strongest ballista would make any impression on the walls, nor the strokes of the most powerful battering-ram."

"Then as far as one can see from this point of view, the walls are quite inaccessible and impregnable?"

"They are on the east, south and west sides. Only on the north side would it be possible to bring a siege-

engine up to the walls, and that would be a work of great difficulty. And there they are protected by a triple wall; the outer one, erected a few years ago by King Agrippa, the father of the present monarch of that name—it was a foolish act on the part of Caius Caligula to allow him to do it—then the middle one, which encloses the upper city, the old part, and finally the inner wall, which defends the city of Sion. May the gods prevent our ever having to take those walls by assault; it would cost us more men than have fallen on the bloodiest battle-fields.”

“You speak as if war with the Jews was imminent.”

“All our legions believe it to be so. Gessius Florus desires war, and stirs up the Jews, if only they can be incited to rebel. And I think he is quite right. Otherwise we shall never have peace in Palestine. The nation ought to be destroyed and the temple plundered. Nowhere was there ever booty better worth having. People say the gold in the vaults of the temple is piled up to the height of a man. Then think of the offerings alone, the golden and silver shields, the vases and I know not what. It is said that there is a table within the sanctuary and an enormous candlestick with seven branches all of solid gold. Of course Florus would retain the greater part for himself and for the Emperor, for he understands pilfering better than Albinus and Felix did, who were the Procurators before him. But a considerable portion would fall to the share of the troops, and on that account I hope Cestius will leave us here in Jerusalem, where fermentation is beginning and where there is more to be earned than in Antioch.”

“It is very probable that we shall remain here and that the whole of the twelfth legion will follow us thither,” Lucius answered. “From what I have heard, I believe Cestius intends seriously to impress on Florus the necessity for gentler measures, so as to avert the threatened storm. In that case your bright hopes of plunder would vanish into thin air. But are you not afraid of the vengeance of the God of the Jews, if you stretch out your hands to rob Him of the sacred offerings?”

“The God of the Jews? certainly I do not want to

make an enemy of Him. But our gods, Jupiter and Mars are mightier than He is and they hate Him. Our Flamen told me that. And if I give them a good share of my spoil, they will surely protect me from His wrath."

Whilst conversing in this manner, the horsemen had reached the bottom of the valley and were pursuing their way at the foot of the declivity crowned by the eastern wall of the temple with its long colonades. A steep path led upwards to the Golden Gate, which stood open on account of the festival. A stream of pilgrims were ascending to it, for thousands who had come thither for the Pasch, and who could not find accommodation in the town, had camped out for the night in the valley and on the sides of Mount Olivet, sleeping in tents. The solemn sound of the trumpet was now calling to morning prayer from the roof of the temple.

The Centurion was going to take the path leading up to the temple, but before he could turn his horse's head in that direction, Martius stopped him, saying that they would infallibly be torn to pieces by the people, if they ventured to cross the outer court of the temple on horseback. If Lucius wished to go that way, he would accompany him on foot; meanwhile their comrades could take the horses round to the bridge which connected the temple with the upper city. To this Lucius agreed; thus the two climbed the hill together, while the others went on their way through the Valley of Cedron, and entered the city by the Sheep's Gate.

As he and Martius walked along, Lucius could not help noticing that they were regarded by the pilgrims with an aversion which they took no pains to conceal, and he heard words muttered behind him, which, although he could not quite catch their meaning, were, he felt sure, no flattering epithets. When they reached the Golden Gate they were stopped by the guard with loud shouts. How could they presume to enter the temple precincts bearing arms? a young officer asked them, and the guard lowered their spears in a threatening manner.

The Decurion, whilst he remembered that no horseman was allowed to enter the gates, had forgotten that the prohibition applied equally to any Roman carrying



arms. Lucius would have been quite willing to turn back, but the insulting tone in which the Jewish officer addressed him, made his blood boil, and the proud Roman thought military honour demanded that he should not let it pass. He therefore planted his lance upon the ground before him and replied, with all the dignity of a Roman officer: "A Centurion of the 12th legion is not accustomed to be screamed at as if he were a Jewish donkey-driver. Have the goodness to apologize, and we will instantly go back. Otherwise you will have to answer to Cestius Gallus for this insult to a Captain in the Roman army."

While Lucius was speaking others of the guard had come up at the call of the sentries, to defend the gate, and behind them a vast crowd effectually barred the entrance to the Temple Court. And in the rear of the two Romans the pilgrims who were coming up formed a living and impenetrable wall.

"We are caught in a pretty trap," the Decurion muttered. "I will shout over these people's heads to our comrades in the Antonia to come to our aid."

"You will do nothing of the sort. It would only give occasion to useless bloodshed, for long before they could get to us, we should have been torn to pieces. But here comes the Captain of the Temple-guard; he will surely hear reason."

In fact at this juncture Eleazar, Caiaphas' grandson, presented himself at the head of his armed guard, in the wide entry of the open gate. He was a young man, about the same age as Lucius, and half a head taller, although the latter was considerably above the average height. His stately figure was rendered more imposing by a splendid suit of armour, profusely ornamented with gold, and a high, glittering helmet, both of Grecian workmanship, probably a part of the spoils won by his ancestors in the time of the Machabees. Haughtiness and hatred flashed out of his dark eyes as they rested on the Roman officer, whose countenance, as he looked composedly at his opponent, expressed admiration more than dislike. However the first glance was enough to convince Lucius that the Captain of the Temple-guard was an enemy.

"What is this disturbance here at the Golden Gate? Would these uncircumcised Roman dogs dare to enter armed into the holy place?"

Happily the Centurion did not understand the epithet applied to him and his companion in Aramaic, or else he would have been beside himself with fury. As it was, he answered in a cold, courteous tone, speaking Greek: "This is a misunderstanding. I was not aware that you do not permit the soldiers of your Emperor to enter the court-yard of this magnificent temple bearing arms. I am ready either to turn back, or to give my sword into your hands, on your word of honour, if you will accompany me across the outer Court of the Temple. Only before doing so, I must request the young officer, who addressed me in so unmannerly a fashion, to make some kind of apology. Otherwise I shall lay a complaint before the Governor."

The Captain answered in the most contemptuous manner. "Do listen to this haughty Roman," he exclaimed. "He is actually going to complain of me! He is welcome to do so, he may go to the Emperor himself for aught I care! But now give up your sword, and that unconditionally. I arrest you as an insolent disturber of the peace."

At this the Centurion's indignation got the better of him. "I will give up my life sooner than my sword, and surrender myself a prisoner to you!" he exclaimed. "Out with your sword, man, and let us settle the matter in single combat, unless you are a coward!" So saying he took off his military cloak, which he wrapped round his left arm in lieu of a shield, and stood, his short Roman sword firmly grasped in his right hand, before his antagonist, his eyes flashing with anger. For a moment the Captain appeared to hesitate whether he should or should not accept this challenge; then returning his sword to its scabbard, he ordered the guard to arrest the two Roman soldiers by force.

But at that same instant a movement was perceptible in the crowd. "Hold, hold, make place for the High-Priests," the temple servers were heard to cry. And out of the temple, where the report of a dispute with

the Romans had already reached them, Simeon and Ezechias, with other leaders of the moderate party, were seen hastening towards the Golden Gate, to mediate between the contending parties. Enraged at this interference, the Captain ordered his men to carry out his command instantly and handcuff the two Roman miscreants. But the guard paid more heed to the two venerable old men, who had once filled the office of High-Priest, and who now, arrayed in their sacerdotal vestments, with uplifted hands imposed silence on all present.

"What has occurred here?" Ezechias asked his nephew.

"I am fulfilling the duties of my office, uncle, defending the sanctity of the temple against the uncircumcised—"

"When will you learn to curb your unruly tongue, and act less rashly, hot-headed youngster? You would give over the holy city and the temple of God to destruction, if you could, for the sake of your unchecked temper. This young man does not look as if he wished to attempt any desecration of our temple. You have again intentionally picked a quarrel, as if you were bent upon fanning the smouldering discord between our unhappy nation and the all-powerful Romans, which unfortunately appears every day more likely to burst into a flame. I am sadly afraid that the fire will burn us up."

The majority of the bystanders agreed with the warning which the former High-Priest uttered, the pilgrims being impressed by the sight of his venerable form and priestly garments. "The Priest of God speaks the truth, the Captain was carried away by excess of zeal," said a voice from the crowd. And when the Centurion, at Ezechias' request, had calmly explained the circumstances, the people, easily-swayed, expressed their approval of the Priest's decision, that the two Romans were not to blame.

Eleazar gnashed his teeth with anger, but he was forced to swallow both his own wrath and his uncle's reproof. He even went so far as to make a slight apology, though he accompanied the words with a look

of no very peaceful kind. It was tantamount to saying: Henceforth we two are mortal enemies, and we have not seen each other for the last time. This the Centurion perfectly understood, but at the time he expressed himself as satisfied with the reparation his opponent offered. Then turning to the grey-haired Priests and their followers, he cordially thanked them for their opportune interposition, which had been the means not only of saving his life and that of his companion, but of averting a great calamity from the Jewish people. Finally he handed his sword to Ezechias, with the request that he would kindly conduct his comrade and himself across the court of the temple to the bridge leading to the upper city.

Simeon, Ezechias and their followers escorted the two strangers through Solomon's cloisters, a colonnade which bounded the Court of the Gentiles on the eastern side, to the Royal cloisters, which formed the southern boundary. It was a long way. The Centurion gazed in astonishment at the gigantic proportions of these enclosures, and the magnificence of the hundreds and hundreds of pillars composing these cloisters. The granite columns, 44 feet in height, were so colossal in girth, that two men could scarcely encircle them with their arms. Between these columns a view was obtained of the Court of the Gentiles, unroofed and paved with coloured tiles; and in its midst, surrounded by stone colonnades and wide flights of marble steps, stood the vast temple of dazzling white marble. Crowds of people were moving about in the Court, pouring into the interior of the temple through its numerous doors. But the occurrence that had just taken place prevented Lucius from finding any pleasure at that time in viewing the splendid structure. He strode in silence under the escort of the priests to the western end of the Royal cloisters, where his sword was returned to him by Ezechias. With a few words of thanks he parted from the old man and his followers, and crossed the bridge with Martius. At the other end they found the troop of horsemen, who had been waiting for them some considerable time.

NOTE.—The Royal Cloisters are described by Josephus as a work "which deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun." They had three "walks" or naves, which extended along the whole south side of the enclosure of the temple for the length of a furlong (660 feet.) The breadth of the side aisles was 30 feet and the height 50 feet; the breadth of the middle one was 45 feet, and the height of it much greater than of those on either side. There appear to have been towers at each end. The south-eastern corner is supposed to be "the pinnacle of the temple," mentioned by St. Matthew (ch. 4. 5.); it stood on a giddy height, "a vastly high elevation" above the level of the outer Court of the temple.

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## CHAPTER 5.

### In Berenice's Palace.

"By Bacchus!" exclaimed the Decurion, as he settled himself once more in the saddle, "all's well that ends well! Upon my honour, a quarter of an hour ago I would not have given a battered *as*<sup>1</sup> (a brass farthing) for our two lives. But I shall remember that great Jewish lout in Greek armour when I see him again." And Martius proceeded to give his comrades a graphic description of the adventure that had befallen Lucius and himself.

Lucius glanced back at the hill on which the temple was built, separated at that spot from the Upper Town, Mount Sion by a ravine, the Tyropæon valley. The bridge which he had just crossed formed the only means of communication. From the lower town, stretching away northwards on the right, the whole of which could be overlooked from his present standpoint, long flights of steps led up to the temple. For a moment the Centurion's eyes rested on the procession of devout worshippers, wearing the white garments of the festival and singing psalms, who were mounting the steps nearest to them, and he was compelled to acknowledge that he had never seen so great a multitude with so recollected a demeanour, ascending the steps which in Rome led up to the national sanctuary, the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. At that instant another loud trumpet blast sounded from the roof of the temple, and as the echo died away in the distance there rose from the Court of the Sanctuary the song of a thousand voices, with the accompaniment of harp and cymbal, priests and people chanting alternately. Lucius could not catch the words, but he felt that they were solemn and sublime, and his soul was stirred within him. We Romans, he said to himself, might learn a great deal from this

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<sup>1</sup>) The smallest Roman copper coin.

despised Hebrew people, in regard to the manner of worthily conducting divine worship.

He then rode straight on to the king's palace, which occupied the north-west corner of Mount Sion. He thus had to traverse almost the whole of the Upper City, and whilst doing this, he made the Decurion tell him the names of the principal buildings. First they came on the right, to the Palace of Agrippa or the Asmonean Palace; the Asmoneans being the ancient sacerdotal race of the Machabees, which Herod had destroyed. Adjoining that was the spacious area of Xyst, closed in by galleries. "That is where public games and public assemblies are held," Martius explained. "Contemptible child's play, compared to the sports of the Roman circus. And the palaces are poor little cottages by the side of the imperial structures of our divine Nero. Yet they contain tapestries, plate and gems which are treasures and which are worthy of an Emperor, at any rate such as would be a fine windfall for a Roman soldier. And in the vaults large amounts of gold and silver are said to be stored. Those Herods were so opulent, that once upon a time they made a present of a hundred talents to Augustus. What a shame it seems that we should allow these barbarians to possess all this wealth."

The way now lay through narrow, ill-paved, steep alleys between rows of dark, low houses with flat roofs. These alleys were crowded with people, who had some difficulty in getting out of the way of the horsemen, and many a look of hatred, many an expression of rage, followed them as they passed onward up the hill. Only a few windows closed with lattice-work looked out on this alley, and the space allotted to the house-doors had been measured out with a niggard hand. Lucius, who had just come from Rome and Antioch, was wholly unacquainted with this style of eastern architecture; with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders he ejaculated: "Fancy such a wretched place being the chief town of a wealthy nation! I hope I shall not be detained long within these walls. Are these houses or dungeons?"

"They are houses, Sir, and far too good for this pack of cheats. You do not know them. They have all



their windows at the back, looking over the courts and gardens, and the interior is fitted up more grandly than any one would suppose, judging by these blank walls. But there is a house yonder which would do credit to Rome itself. A trim, pretty place, is it not? Those pillars were chiselled in Alexandria, and cost a tidy amount of ill-gotten gains. Berenice lives there, King Agrippa's sister, the Queen of Cilicia. I believe she has left her husband; they say she is angling now after a bigger fish."

Lucius had once seen this Princess, whose beauty of person and mental gifts were equalled by her all-absorbing ambition. He had been presented to her, together with some other officers, and he thought that the royal lady had singled him out from among the other guests. At any rate his brother officers had joked with him about the brilliant conquest he had made as soon as he set foot on oriental soil. "A happy omen! A Princess' favour can augur nothing but good," he had laughingly replied at the time, and never thought about it again.

But now he recalled to mind the lovely Queen, and glanced with some interest at the palace which, though not spacious, was a perfect specimen of the latin style of architecture. The columns supporting the portico, all of red granite were simply superb. As he passed he caught sight of a lady, in the act of drawing aside the silk curtain before the window, to look out at the horsemen, whom, from the sound of their horses' hoofs coming up the street, she guessed to be Roman soldiers. "That must be Berenice herself," the Centurion said to himself, and saluted her according to military etiquette. He could not help fancying that she returned the greeting with more graciousness than an ordinary officer could expect from a Queen. He was riding on, when the Decurion called out to him that some one was beckoning to him to stop. While he was debating within himself whether he should comply with this invitation, or whether he should go on at once to deliver his message to the Governor, a porter stepped forward with a courteous request that the Centurion would give the Queen of Cilicia the pleasure of his company for a few

moments, provided this did not interfere with his military duty.

Thereupon Lucius begged the Decurion to wait for a few minutes and dismounting, threw his bridle to the nearest trooper.

In the vestibule, where the Queen's chamberlain was waiting to receive him, and in the atrium through which he passed, Lucius observed that everything was arranged on the model of the most elegant Roman palaces. Costly mosaics adorned pavement and walls; the pillars and pedestals were masterpieces of Grecian workmanship. The only difference was that on the surface of the walls arabesques and painted flowers were substituted for the customary scenes from the lives of the gods, and where statues of the deities or of ancestors were usually placed, huge vases of porphyry stood, filled with rare exotics. To account for this Lucius' guide remarked: "My royal mistress could not venture to erect statues of her father, King Agrippa, or of her grandfather, of yet greater renown, Herod the Great, the friend of the divine Emperor, or any other members of her illustrious house. The blind fanaticism of the Jews would not tolerate it." At the end of the atrium he drew aside a portière of rich texture and with a low obeisance ushered the officer into a room furnished with truly regal pomp.

Not in the residences of the most opulent Romans did Lucius remember to have seen such a display of wealth. The polished marble floor was almost entirely covered with Persian carpets of a deep crimson hue so thick that the foot sank in them; luxurious couches lined the walls, which were hung with festoons of crimson silk, artistically arranged and adorned with golden crowns. The ceiling, richly moulded and profusely gilt, from which a gold candelabra was suspended, completed the regal splendour of this magnificent apartment.

Before Lucius could recover from his astonishment at the sight of this luxury, a curtain, heavy with embroidery, was thrown back, and Berenice advanced towards him. He thought he had never seen a more beautiful and majestic woman, and the expression of

his countenance betrayed his thoughts. The Queen perceived this, and bestowed on him a self-satisfied smile, her pearly teeth just showing between her finely-cut lips. Her black, curly hair was not elaborately dressed, but held together by a gold band. She stroked it back from her low, wide forehead, and drawing her pale-green robe somewhat closer around her, sank down on one of the cushioned couches, while with a condescending motion of her right hand she made a sign to Lucius to seat himself on a low stool of ivory.

But Lucius, who had removed his helmet on entering the apartment, declined this invitation with a low bow. "Noble Queen," he said, "permit me to receive your orders standing. I have recently come from Antioch, and am charged with a message to be conveyed to the Governor."

"So you come from the Legate, brave Centurion? I thought as much, when I saw you riding up the street. It was rumoured that Cestius Gallus would himself come up to the Feast."

"In fact, I have to announce to Florus that he is expected this very evening."

"In that case I will detain you no longer, although I am afraid that bringing such tidings, you will not meet with a warm welcome from the Procurator. For my part, I am very glad that Gallus is coming, for I hope that he will do something to protect my nation—which is very dear to me—from the shameful oppression of this Governor. I also rejoice that you have come, my handsome Centurion. I believe I saw you once before, is it not so? In Caesarea was it? Oh then I was not wrong. I must ask Gallus to leave you here in Jerusalem, then I shall beg you to come very often to see me, and we can read the newest works of the Roman poets together, which I have sent to me whenever a vessel sails from Rome for these parts. Your voice sounds sympathetic. I should so much like to acquire somewhat more fluency in the language of the rulers of the world."

At first Berenice had spoken Greek, but the last sentence was said in Latin, perfectly correct as to gram-

mar, but with a decidedly foreign accent. Then she paused, and fixed her dark eyes, the effect of which was heightened by carefully applied touches of henna, with an inquiring look on the Centurion. She expected that he would respond to her gracious speeches with the compliments to which she was only too fully accustomed. Lucius contented himself, however, with thanking her for her great, and by him undeserved kindness.

The young man's calm demeanour made the vain woman all the more determined to enslave him. "Well then," she said with her most captivating smile, "I shall consider your answer as an assent, somewhat too respectfully worded, and thank you for it, so I shall ask Cestius to leave you in Jerusalem, but I must not detain you any longer now. With what ease the language of Attica runs off your lips! Indeed, I never remember hearing a Roman speak Greek so well."

"My Mother is an Athenian."

"Oh, that accounts for your uncommon fluency in speaking her beautiful native tongue. But your father is a Roman?"

"He was a Roman senator, and I come of an ancient equestrian order."

"In that case Roman power and Greek refinement are united in your person. But it just occurs to me that you have not told me your name, or rather that I have forgotten it, if you mentioned it to me. About whom am I to speak to the Legate?"

"My name is Lucius Flavus, your Majesty."

"Flavus, Flavius? Then you are perhaps related to Vespasian, the General, the conqueror of the Britons?" Berenice inquired with eager interest.

"Not so, Princess, I cannot lay claim to a name of such renown."

"Not as yet. I should not be surprised if in a few years' time, the golden laurel wreath were to cover your fair locks. If only the laurels are not won at the expense of my nation!" so saying, Berenice gave her hand, sparkling with jewels, to the Centurion, and dismissed him with a gracious nod.

Scarcely had the curtain closed behind him, when

the royal lady's manner completely changed. "Flavus? I thought Flavius was the name I saw on the image the Egyptian showed me," she said thoughtfully. "The slight difference in the name may be a mistake on my part; the figure which she called up to view, offering me the imperial crown was certainly his! It had the same light curly hair, so uncommon for a Roman. The colour of the eyes I do not remember very well, there was not time to notice everything. I wish the old witch was here! But if I sent for her, she would not come, for she knows that in Jerusalem she would incur the risk of being burnt alive."

She took a few turns up and down the thick pile carpet, knitting her brows. "That young Roman treated me in a very off-hand manner," she said to herself, "yet one would imagine that Berenice, to whom every one pays homage, might claim attention and regard from a Legate or an Emperor, much more from a simple officer." Taking up a mirror of polished metal, she gazed with satisfaction at the reflection of her classic features. "No, Iris has not put the least touch too much, and a face like that ought to conquer the world. What does it matter. We shall not lack the means of binding this Roman to our triumphal car, if it seems worth while to do so. Now I must go to Agrippa. We must avail ourselves of the presence of the Legate to effect the downfall of that intolerable Florus, even though his arrogant consort were ten times over the bosom friend of Poppaea Sabina, who ousted Nero's wife from her rights. How I detest these insolent Asiatics, the Procurator and his spouse!"

Thereupon she clapped her hands, and said to the slave who appeared in answer to her summons: "Be quick, tell Chloe to come and dress my hair, and Acta to bring my robe. Not the new purple one with gold fringe, but one of those which came from Antioch, no matter which. I am going to my brother. But for tomorrow you must devise a truly regal costume, for I am going to invite the Syrian Legate and other distinguished guests to dinner. And now order my litter."

"O my royal mistress, it is easy work to array you

as a radiant Queen. Even in this simple attire you might be taken for one of the immortals, so that I am always afraid lest the divine Juno should be envious of you." Such were the flatteries the Greek maid poured into her mistress' ear, as with deft fingers she fastened the golden clasps of a pink silk *diploidion*, a short kind of cape, which fell in graceful folds from the neck to the waist.

"Nonsense, you little flatterer. Make haste and call your fellow-servants, for no one shall touch my hair but Chloe. Now run and tell Eupolemos to give me the two Nubians for my bearers, not those horrid clumsy Germans, one of whom stumbled the other day and nearly threw the litter and me too down the steps at the Xistus."

Chloe and Acta now entered. The former speedily dressed her mistress' hair, sprinkling it with a few drops of perfumed water, whilst the latter, who had charge of the wardrobe, employed herself in spreading the different *himatia* upon the couches for selection. "The first mantle that comes handy, the blue one with silver trimming," Berenice called out to her.

"But that colour will not go well with the pale green robe—"

"Let it be the red one then. Only make haste, I ought to be with the King before now."

A magnificent red mantle was fastened above the left shoulder and under the right, thus leaving the right arm, which was adorned with costly bracelets, free, while on the left side the rich material, edged with deep embroidery, was held together, falling in folds down to the knee. It took some time for Acta to arrange and fix all the folds aright; meanwhile the other maids held up a large polished plate of silver before their mistress in which her form was mirrored. When her toilet was finally completed, she swept out of the chamber, and assisted by her major domo Eupolemos, entered the litter which was awaiting her in the vestibule.

In the meantime the Centurion with his little band of followers rode onward towards the royal palace in a thoughtful mood. The unexpected interview with Bere-

nice, and the manner in which she had received him caused him at heart more uneasiness than gratification. Her dazzling beauty and her gracious advances were not without their effect on him, although he had preserved so cool a demeanour externally. How utterly different she was to Thamar, the young Jewess! Berenice in fact resembled one of the goddesses of Olympus, he told himself, whereas the pale Jewish maiden with the trustful eyes was like one of the genii of whom the eastern poets sang. Purity and childlike innocence were written on her features; whereas the pride of rank, the fire of passion gleamed in Berenice's dark eye. Her character too, was not spotless. All sorts of stories were told about her in the camp. But was she worse than the great Roman ladies? At any rate she was not like Messalina or Agrippina; or to look still higher, the Empress Poppaea Sabina, what was she? Were strict morality and virtuous conduct to be met with amongst the women of the day? Faugh, if one could rise to a position of power and fame by giving his hand to this rich and mighty Princess —

The Centurion's meditations were abruptly broken off by the Decurion, who exclaimed: "Here we are," at the same time pointing out the royal palace on the other side of the large square, which rose proudly before their view. It was built by Herod in the north-west corner of the Upper City; thus it was protected on two sides by the wall of the city with its massive fortresses, and on the others also it was encompassed with solid walls and towers. In the angle formed by the old wall, where the two walls of more recent erection met, stood the strong tower of Hippicus; the immense blocks of stone employed in its construction excite wonder to this day.\*) The second tower which Herod built in memory of and named after his brother Phasaël, whom he had caused to be assassinated, was yet loftier and more solid.

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\*) NOTE. Josephus (Ant. 15, 11.) gives the dimensions of these stones, or blocks of white marble, as being twenty-five cubits in length, twelve in breadth, and eight in depth. These measurements might be considered as exaggerated were not blocks of double the size to be seen in the ruins of the famous temple at Baalbec.



It was constructed on the model of the far-famed tower of Pharos, the light-house of Alexandria, which however it exceeded in circumference. Up to the height of forty cubits it was of solid masonry; then there was a gallery protected by strong bulwarks, above which the tower rose in several stories to the height of ninety cubits, the whole being surmounted by a watch-tower crowned with battlements. The third tower Herod named after his consort, the beautiful and unhappy Mariamne, the last of the race of the Asmoneans, whom Herod, instigated by jealousy, put to death. This tower was pleasing to the eye on account of its graceful form.

While Lucius traversed the vast square, he inquired of Martius the names of the three towers, to which, he acknowledged, he had seen nothing equal either in Rome or Antioch. And when they reached the gate in the wall, he was scarcely less astonished at the sight of the palace itself. It was a broad building two stories high with two side wings at right angles from the main building. From the spacious square in front, where standing-room could have been found for thousands of people, a marble flight of steps extending the whole width of the building led up to the quadrangle formed by the three sides of the palace. Rows of Doric and Ionic pillars rose one above another on the walls of the palace up to the very roof, terminating in a gallery protected by a stone balustrade, whence an all-embracing view of the town and temple could be obtained. The pure white shafts and gilded capitals of the columns, glittering in the sun, stood out in strong relief against the dark marble of the palace, to which the gloomy masonry of the town wall and the lofty, frowning towers formed an effective background, whilst the dark green of tall cypresses and sycamores of unusual size constituted a pleasing frame to the picture. Far away to the left stretched a large pleasure garden with shrubs and groups of trees, ponds and fountains. On the right were several out-buildings and stables, besides the barracks of the Roman garrison, whence a number of recruits, who had just been drilled by some old decurions, ran out to meet the little band of horsemen, as soon as they had been

admitted by the guard at the castle-gate. A centurion had sent them out with orders to take the horses to the stables, and he himself followed to greet the newly-arrived comrades.

"What, you here, Lucius Flavus!" he exclaimed, on recognizing the leader of the party. "Have the gods sent you to be bored to death in Jerusalem as a compensation for the unexampled good fortune you have hitherto had?"

"I was not aware till this moment, Metilius Celer, that I had given the immortal gods any cause for envy. It strikes me that you have not yet forgiven me the few sestertii I once won from you in the Circus Maximus by a lucky wager. Well, well, I am heartily glad to find an old comrade here. I must go off at once to the Governor, I have to announce to him that the Legate will arrive here this evening."

"In that case my men must rub up their armour.— Look here, all you fellows: every soldier in the cohorts is to clean his shield and cuirass, and make himself fit to be seen. If not, by Hercules, it will be the worse for them!—These lads take it easy in this miserable place," Metilius continued, addressing Lucius. "But you need not be in such a hurry to give your message, it will be some time yet before Gessius Florus recovers from the effects of last night's carouse. Have you breakfasted? No! Come with me to the *triclinium*, (mess-room) the Governor's house-steward is a friend of mine, he will have a tasty morsel from last night's feast and a pitcher of sweet Cyprus wine to set before you. And while you take this refreshment, you can tell me the latest news from Rome, and I will give you some idea of our position in this god-forsaken country. By the heavenly twins! We are caught in a nice trap, and how we ever are to get out of it, if the three million Jews, who have now assembled in the city to celebrate their feast, really allow themselves to be incited to a serious insurrection—that, my good friend Lucius, is a problem which my poor understanding is powerless to solve."

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## CHAPTER 6.

### The Morning of Good Friday.

Despite the disturbance of the previous night all were astir early on the morning of Good Friday in the house at Bethania. Even the two girls who were not always wont to rise at their Aunt's first call, came punctually into the sitting-room for morning prayers. They had dressed as quietly as possible, so as not to wake Thamar who was sleeping in the adjoining chamber. Their Aunt told them that she was still fast asleep.

"The poor child needs it after all she went through last night," Salome said. "And who knows if even worse trials are not before her? Eusebius feels very anxious about the condition of his patient this morning."

"Poor fellow! How sad it would be for his daughter if he were taken from her," Miriam answered. "But of course we should keep Thamar with us and treat her like one of ourselves."

"Yes of course we should," rejoined Martha, who took a more practical view of things than her somewhat impulsive sister. "All the same, I must own that I wish that they had not been quartered on us just at this time."

"O Martha, how can you talk in that way," cried the indignant Miriam.

"Well then, just tell me what we are to do. She will want to go with us if Uncle takes us into the town today. Just fancy, she has never seen Jerusalem and the temple!"

"She seems much more easily contented than you are, my dear child, and will not, I am sure, persist in accompanying you, if we raise any obstacle to her doing so. Besides she will wish to help nurse her Father," Salome said.

"I should like her to go with us," Miriam exclaimed. "How delighted I should be if I could persuade her to

become one of ourselves, and could present her to good bishop Simeon as a neophyte for instruction. I have thought out a whole plan of campaign. First of all we will take Thamar to the sepulchre whence our Lord raised Lazarus to life. Silas, the gardener, who witnessed the miracle, will convince her of the truth. Then on the way from the Garden of Olives to Golgotha we will tell the dear child all the history of our Blessed Lord's passion, and finally describe His glorious Resurrection and Ascension. Bishop Simeon, the Deacon Nikanor, our Uncle himself, besides many other living persons saw the risen Saviour in His glory. Surely on the testimony of such witnesses she could not fail to believe that Jesus Christ was really the promised Messiah and the true Son of God. Oh do let me tell her all this! Today, on the very day on which our Lord died, I will persuade Thamar to become a Christian."

"That is not a work to be accomplished by human arguments but by divine grace," remarked Eusebius, who unobserved by Miriam, had entered the room while she was speaking. "And it is a grace which must be asked of God in prayer. Now call Silas and the others; we will hold our usual devotions at home, since we cannot join our brethren who will assemble in Jerusalem. My patient will sleep on for another hour or two, so there is nothing to be done for him at present."

Silas, the gardener to whom Lucius had spoken, and a few other men servants entered the room. In a low voice Eusebius recited a short morning prayer, which all present repeated after him; then in a few heartfelt words, he reminded them that on that day, three and thirty years ago, their Lord had suffered the cruel death of the cross for their sake. "These eyes beheld Him hanging on the cross, oh how terribly mangled and disfigured! These ears heard Him praying to His Father: 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do', when the Scribes and Pharisees blasphemed and mocked Him in His death agony. It seems to me as if it had been yesterday, so vividly do I see Him before me wearing the crown of thorns, the blood streaming from His wounds. Would that you too could have seen it,

my children; never, never could you forget the love that made Him endure for us so awful a death!"

Eusebius' emotion was too great to allow him to say more, and tears rolled down his wrinkled cheeks. All who were present wept with him, especially Miriam, whose affectionate heart was kindled with love for her divine Master. After a lengthened pause, Eusebius said that instead of proceeding to relate his personal reminiscences, he would read aloud the history of the Passion, as Matthew had written it down with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

He accordingly took a new parchment roll out of an iron case, and after raising it respectfully to his forehead and lips, began slowly and distinctly to read the description, powerful in its simplicity, of the Passion of our Lord, from His Agony in the Garden to His last breath upon the cross. When in conclusion he read of the signs and wonders that followed immediately upon the death of the Son of God, the rending of the veil of the temple, the earthquake, the appearance of the resuscitated dead, and the testimony of the centurion who was on duty at the execution: "Indeed this was the Son of God," a faint cry interrupted him, and looking up, he saw Thamar standing on the threshold, tears running round her cheeks.

Martha's voice, calling the servants to family prayers, had roused Rabbi Sadoc's daughter from her dreams. In the bewilderment of first awakening she did not know where she was, and fancying herself in her own little chamber at Antioch, called to her nurse Sara to come and help her dress. But on putting out her hand, first on one side, then on the other, she failed to find the little table which, in her own home stood by her bedside, and her silver bell was also missing. Then, all at once, on hearing Martha's unfamiliar voice once more, the whole events of the evening before recurred to her mind, and she realised her own position. The attack of the robbers, her rescue by the Roman centurion, the loss of her brother, her father's dangerous state, all came back to her memory and a pang shot through her heart. "No, it is not a bad dream, but sad reality," she said

to herself as she rose sorrowfully from her couch. "I must go to my poor Father; I must know how he is."

She dressed quickly, and fastened on her sandals. Then, drawing back the curtain, she cast a hasty glance at the unknown country outspread before her, on which the sun had just risen in unclouded brilliance. In the garden below, the little birds trilled their morning lay, and the thought that the God in whose praise they sang, was acquainted with her grief and would not abandon her, fell like a soothing balm on her suffering heart. Kneeling down, with uplifted hands, she implored God's blessing and protection for her father, her brother and herself; then rising up with fresh courage she sallied forth in search of her kind host and her sick father.

Remembering that Eusebius had told her that his two nieces slept in the adjoining chamber, she stood listening at the entrance to that room; the heavy curtain, which for the most part replaces our wooden doors in eastern houses, being partly drawn aside, she saw that there was no one in the room, and it had already been set in order. But one thing which Thamar descried in it gave her quite a shock. Standing on a small table, between two vases filled with bright spring flowers, in a silver frame, was the picture of a lady of celestial dignity and grace.

"In the name of Heaven whatever is that!" Thamar exclaimed, turning pale with horror. "Is it possible that these good people who gave us so warm a welcome last night, can be heathen, hateful in God's sight, and not faithful children of Abraham? How can they tolerate an idol under their roof in direct violation of the law of God, and even pay idolatrous worship to it, as those offerings of flowers denote?"

Thamar could scarcely refrain from rushing into the room and breaking to pieces the picture which excited her indignation so hotly. For against nothing, from her youth up, had she been accustomed to hear her father declaim more vehemently, than against everything savouring of idolatry. But she checked her anger, resolving to take her entertainers to task about it at once, and seek some other refuge for her father, if they would not consent to commit this pagan abomination to the flames.

With her mind full of this subject, she descended the stairs and found herself in the hall, on to which several doors opened. She was not sure which room was the one where her father was. Then she caught the sound of Eusebius' voice, which she recognized at once, and approached the room from which the voice proceeded; her host appeared to be reading aloud something very grave and solemn. At first she paid no heed to what he read, only waiting until he should stop, so as to allow of her entering the room without interrupting him. But what she heard arrested her attention, and interested her in spite of herself. Who could that Jesus have been, who was betrayed by one of His disciples with a kiss, and who said so gently to him: Friend, whereto art thou come? And who could be meant by that Father whom He could ask to give Him presently more than twelve legions of Angels? She had never heard anything about all that. Then to her astonishment it was read out that the Jesus in question was led to Caiaphas the High-Priest, the grandfather of her affianced husband!

Thereupon the young girl went close up to the portière, so as not to lose a single word of the touching story. She listened awestruck to the solemn utterance of the High-Priest: I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God, and the no less solemn answer of the prisoner: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.

She knew now what it all meant: it was the story of the Nazarite, whom her father had so often denounced as a madman and a blasphemer. Thamar fully agreed with the verdict of Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim: He hath blasphemed; He is worthy of death. But how was the lofty, calm demeanour of that Jesus about whom they were reading to be reconciled with the depraved heart of a blasphemer, or the unhinged mind of a lunatic? Every sentence that she heard Eusebius read seemed to strike at the root of her pre-conceived opinions. The despair of the traitor Judas and the fulfilment of the prophet's words about the thirty pieces of silver made

her waver in her belief still more. With breathless attention she followed the narrative of the proceedings before the tribunal of Pontius Pilate, and heard how the Roman Governor himself was convinced of the innocence of the accused and the envy of his accusers, and how he strove, but strove fruitlessly, to gain the multitude to his side and let Him go free. But they all cried: Release unto us Barabbas! Let Him be crucified! And then the cowardly sentence passed by the Governor with the self-exculpatory words: I am innocent of the blood of this just man, provoking the terrible answer from the whole people: His blood be upon us, and upon our children!

Then in pathetic words came the description of the fearful scourging and crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross and the crucifixion, the ignominious, agonizing death on the cross! — Was that man a fool or a criminal, that God, on whom He called for help when on the cross, left Him thus to die? Next she heard of the marvellous signs that attended the death of the God made man, one after another, and so deeply was she impressed by the dictum of the centurion: Indeed this was the Son of God, that unable to contain her feelings any longer, she stepped, profoundly agitated, into the room.

At Thamar's sudden entrance the two girls started up with an exclamation of alarm, and the other persons present looked in surprise at the Rabbi's daughter, who seemed to have lost her senses. Eusebius alone preserved his habitual serenity of manner, and received the maiden with a kindly smile. She on her part appeared unconscious of the slight commotion her entrance caused; with quivering lips she inquired:

"Can it be that the Messiah really thus came and was put to death by His own people?"

"Thus in truth He did come, and His own people — in their culpable blindness — nailed Him to the cross," Eusebius replied.

"And the people of Israel were not converted, even after the great and wondrous signs about which you have been reading? No, it is not possible, Jerusalem, the whole nation of Jews would surely have recognized



the truth, had such miracles really taken place. It is a fable, an audacious fiction that you were reading. Tell me; is it not so?"

"On the contrary it is only too true, and I, besides many other living persons, can bear witness to the facts. Those of our people who had a good will received the gift of faith. And you too will receive that gift, if in all humility you ask of God to enable you to see the truth. But now you are much too agitated to judge of these things aright. I did not intend to bring them before you so soon; but as it has pleased God thus suddenly to open your eyes, He will carry on the good work to the end."

"Oh what can I say! How can I command my feelings! What if that Jesus of Nazareth, whom my Father taught me from my childhood to curse, were really the Messiah? Oh tell me—I know from your honest eyes, your kind heart, that I can believe you—tell me as you value your soul's salvation: did you see any of the miracles about which you have been reading to us?"

"I was an eye-witness of the eclipse of the sun's light, and you may ask your Father whether in the course of nature such an event is possible at the time that the moon is full. I felt the earth quake beneath my feet, and I saw how the rock was rent on which the cross stood; I can show you the fissure, if you will accompany me to the spot. I saw yet greater marvels than those of which you have heard; I saw Him who expired upon the cross, whose side the Roman soldiers pierced with a lance before my eyes, so that blood and water flowed from it, I saw Him, Jesus Christ, risen again from the dead as He had foretold; I saw Him dwelling once more amongst us, teaching us, eating with us, and finally ascending to Heaven in His glory. I who am now standing before you, can bear witness to all this, and I could mention more than one living person who was also an eye-witness of all that occurred.

"Enough, enough!" Thamar cried, falling on her knees. "My Lord and my God, how severely Thou wilt in Thy justice chastise Thy people, for having called down Thy blood upon them and their children!"

"God is no less merciful than just, and more ready to forgive than to punish. As the good Shepherd seeks the lost sheep, so He seeks the erring sinner and carries him back to the fold. Matthew, whose sacred narrative you heard me read, did not record in writing all that Jesus Christ said and did while on the cross. He relates how the two thieves, who were crucified with Him, joined with the Scribes and High-Priests in mocking Him; but he omits to say how the crucified Saviour prayed to God, saying: Father, forgive them for they know not what they do; and that to one of the robbers who repented and implored pardon, He said in mercy: This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

"How can I take in and believe all this? Have pity on me, and give me time to think it over quietly and talk to my father about it," Thamar cried, repelling with a gesture the two sisters who had approached to embrace her. She felt like a wandering and benighted traveller, who suddenly sees a blazing light in the darkness; involuntarily he closes his eyes, dazzled and pained by the sudden glare, and wishes himself back in the obscurity to which he had become accustomed.

The next moment she started to her feet, repeating her last words: "My Father! Oh, how could I forget him; take me to him immediately. But no, he must not see me in this state of agitation; he would think some calamity had befallen me, and it may perhaps prove my greatest happiness. Let me go alone into the garden for a while, and when I am more calm, let me see my Father. What sort of a night has he had? And is the wound going on well?"

Eusebius answered hopefully, and the two sisters conducted Thamar to the arbour. Martha would have liked only too well to have remained there, and said many a kind word of sympathy or instruction. But Miriam had more tact; she only said: "Our Lord Jesus Himself often sat in this arbour, when He was on earth. May He speak words of consolation to your heart, and enlighten you with His Holy Spirit!" Thereupon she laid her hand on her sister's arm and they left their visitor alone.

For a long time Thamar paced up and down the large harbour, and externally at least, she gradually calmed down. But the more she thought over what she had heard, which had raised such a storm of doubt in her soul, and compared it with the idea she had till then entertained of the Messiah, the more the prejudice wherein she had been brought up clouded the light of grace. How often she had heard her father depict in the sublime words of the Prophets the grandeur and majesty of the Messiah! He was to appear as a great Conqueror, a mighty Prince, the deliverer of His people from the yoke of the Romans, as a triumphant victor to execute vengeance on all their foes. He was destined to raise the throne of His father David above all earthly thrones, and proclaim His law to the people upon Mount Sion. All nations must bow down before Him; He would smite them with the edge of the sword; the Gentiles, Tyre and Sidon and the remotest isles must pay Him tribute and lay at His feet the gold of Ophir, frankincense and myrrh, and all the treasures this globe can boast!

How did that accord with the image of a criminal, scourged and crowned with thorns, who perished miserably on the cross, condemned as a deceiver and blasphemer of God by the High-Priests and Ancients of the people, who were well versed in the prophecies, and who surely would not have rejected the true Messiah? And was not the testimony of these men who were familiar with all the books of the prophets more to be trusted than the words of her host and his people? No doubt he was a good old man, and he certainly received her and her father in the kindest manner; his wife besides and his two nieces were dear, friendly people. But the old man must be mistaken!

There were the marvellous signs, certainly—Eusebius declared so emphatically that he had seen them himself, that he had even held intercourse with the Crucified after His death. How was that to be accounted for? It must have been a delusion of the spirits of darkness. Her Father would be able to explain it all to her. At any rate it was not probable that the Messiah, for whom

the prophets predicted a world-wide sway, could come to the wretched end of a blasphemer, dying on the tree of shame.

Thus Thamar endeavoured to revive her belief in the pre-conceived opinions so deeply-rooted in her mind, and to silence the voice of grace which nevertheless still spoke to her heart in accents of warning and of doubt. She beckoned to Martha, who was lingering near, gathering flowers, and obviously waiting for a sign that her company would be acceptable to the stranger. She was so anxious to become better acquainted with her, and make friends with her. And now that in consequence of what had occurred at morning prayers she considered Thamar as a convert, she longed to take upon herself the office of instructress. How much she had to tell her, and what touching truths! She had arranged her plans: Thamar should accompany her sister and herself on the projected Good Friday expedition from Gethsemane to the house of Annas and Caiaphas, then to the Pretorium and to Herod's palace, and finally make the way of the cross to the summit of Calvary. On the way she could explain and depict all to her new friend in a far more detailed account than that given by the Evangelist Matthew. How their hearts would eventually glow with love to the Saviour! So Martha thought as she hastened to meet her visitor, who was slowly advancing towards her.

The first glance however at Thamar's countenance apprised her that in the interim a change had taken place in her mind. "How cold you seem!" she exclaimed. "I thought to find you full of thankfulness and joy at the grace bestowed on you, full of eagerness and enthusiastic desire to follow the light which the Lord in His mercy so unexpectedly shed on you."

"Suddenly," Thamar answered, "so suddenly indeed that I nearly let myself be surprised into giving credit to these new doctrines of a crucified Messiah. But I am not going to be caught so easily; pardon me for saying so."

"What? Is it possible that you can doubt? After Uncle as an eye-witness pledged himself to the truth of

it all? And I anticipated with so much pleasure that you and Miriam and I would make the way of the cross so devoutly together. After all, you will not care to go with us?"

"I should not think of leaving the house while my Father lies in so precarious a state.—Do not be offended with me, my dear girl. The idea never so much as occurred to me that you or your Uncle were deceiving me. It could not in fact be so, because it was by a mere accident that I heard the roll read which affected me so profoundly. But it would not be wise on my part to act upon this first impression, before the grave doubts are put to rest, which suggested themselves on reflection. I must first of all talk to my Father on the subject; if he sees as you do, I will embrace your faith."

"But your Father cannot talk now, and it may perhaps be a long time before he can use his tongue freely again. Will you resist grace for so long a period? Take care, lest you lose it altogether."

Thamar repeated gently, but decidedly, that her difficulties must be removed before she took any step, and that her Father must do this, since no one surpassed him in knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and acuteness of understanding. Martha's patience forsook her. "What difficulties?" she inquired. "Tell me what they are, and I will give you the answer to them, for all the most learned Rabbis in Israel may say!"

"Another time I shall be delighted to profit by your learning," Thamar answered, somewhat wearily. "But now I want most of all to see my Father. I suppose you are going to put the pretty flowers which you were gathering before the picture I saw on the wall of your chamber. Pardon me, the entrance was open, and I could not help seeing it. I confess I was very much surprised to see such a thing in the house of a Jew. Did not the Lord our God solemnly declare from Mount Sinai by the mouth of His servant Moses: 'I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, to adore them.' Now you little Rabbi, say how do you reconcile your picture with that strict command?"

"Oh, if all the objections you can raise against the resurrection of Christ, corroborated as it is by the evidence of so many eye witnesses, are not more weighty than that, I can soon dispose of them! What makes you think that we worship that picture, or that it was painted to be worshipped? Do you imagine that we worship any being in heaven or on earth except God Almighty? Whatever put such a singular idea into your head? To atone for it I shall make you come with me to the picture of the Mother of God, and help me decorate it. Luke painted it, and I really believe that the Angels assisted him, for without supernatural help his pencil could never have portrayed such dignity and grace. But my original object in gathering these flowers was that we might take them to Jerusalem; I thought perhaps you would like, if you came with us, to scatter them on the spot where the cross stood, or in the holy sepulchre where the lifeless body of our Lord was laid. Now however I shall give them to the Mother of God, with a prayer that she may employ her powerful intercession before the throne of the Most High to obtain your conversion, and your Father's also. So come along. What, you do not wish to?"

"My dear child, pray excuse me until I am better convinced of the dignity of the personage you speak of. There is your Uncle, he seems waiting for me. Do not be vexed with me, but pray for me and my father, and my poor brother who is lost, and ask your dear sister to do the same."

Thus spoke Thamar and away she went, leaving Martha to get over her disappointment as best she could. Eusebius conducted her into the room where the sick man lay. He had not yet recovered consciousness. "When the sun reaches the meridian, your Father will awake out of sleep," he whispered to the girl. "Then I shall come in again, and renew the bandages. Set his mind at rest as much as you can, my daughter, especially in regard to your brother. Do not talk to him about anything that might excite him, do not say a word about the Messiah who has today been revealed to you. When the inflammation has subsided and he can talk again, it will be soon enough to enter on such topics."

So saying Eusebius quitted the room, leaving Thamar alone with her Father. She knelt down by his side, and in anguish of heart implored God to spare him to her. Meanwhile Martha went to look for her sister, in great displeasure, and told her that the stranger wilfully resisted the grace our Lord had that morning so mercifully granted her. "She reminded me, as she knelt there, of Saul, struck down by the bright light on the way to Damascus," she said. "And now she says she doubts again, instead of saying, like Saul: What wilt Thou have me to do?"

"Well, we must pray all the more for her, Martha. But I really do not think that she resists wilfully," Miriam replied.

"She does though," asserted Martha, and she told her sister how Thamar had refused to help her decorate the picture of the Mother of God.

"Let us do it for her then: And may the Mother of our divine Lord take her as her child, and be gracious to her Father and to us all."

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## CHAPTER 7.

### **An Interview with the Governor Gessius Florus.**

Towards midday Pomponius Papilio with his band entered Jerusalem, bringing with them the prisoner Simon Ben Gioras. He experienced some difficulty in making his way through the crowd in the narrow streets and public squares; for the tidings of the capture of the notorious bandit-chief had spread like wild-fire through the city. More than once, there was ground for suspecting that an attempt at rescuing him would be made; but the formidable appearance of the Roman soldiery and the terror inspired by the gleam of the drawn swords in their right hands, overawed the leaderless mob, and they contented themselves with following the little cavalcade with loud cries till the wide expanse before the Royal palace was reached. There a conflict seemed imminent, the mob pressed upon the horsemen on all sides, and, conscious of their immense superiority of numbers, raised a shout while a shower of stones rattled on the shields of the troopers. They were obliged to halt for a moment, and those in the first rank looked to their leader, awaiting his order to use their swords.

Then the tribune Pomponius put his sword's point within an inch of the prisoner's throat, for he was riding beside him, exclaiming: "Bid your countrymen make way for us, otherwise, by the river Styx, your soul shall be in the infernal regions in another moment!"

Those who were near enough to catch these words, stopped short, taken aback. Ben Gioras turned as pale as death, and cried aloud: "Good people, if you act thus, I am a dead man. Let the troops pass on. I hope before long I shall again stand at the head of Israel's champions."

The crowd fell back, and the soldiers moved on unopposed at a quick trot across the square to the gate of the Royal palace; where the centurion who had hastily



called out the guard, brought up his men to support them. But this was no longer necessary, and the prisoner was safely lodged in the citadel without a blow having been struck.

On the marble steps the Governor Gessius Florus was standing in the midst of a group of officers. His Roman toga fell in disorderly folds round his meagre limbs, and he cut a sorry figure beside the tribunes and centurions in their gleaming equipments. His thin neck and small head, rising out of his somewhat baggy garment, and his sharply curved nose, gave him something of the appearance of a bird of prey. All the evil passions of the human heart had left their stamp unmistakably on his sallow countenance; for in truth, if the testimony of Josephus is to be believed, he united in his person all the vices of his predecessors with the addition of no slight element of cowardice. This latter quality had for the moment gained the ascendant; white to the lips he cried aloud: "What is all that? Why are the populace making such an uproar? Is there an insurrection? Let the gates be closed, and the cohorts man the walls and fortresses. Lay into them! Scatter the crowd."

"These measures are quite unnecessary. They are falling back of themselves before the guard," remarked the tribune Claudius Lysias, a veteran warrior, grown grey in military service, who had been quartered in Jerusalem for ten years. Then with an expression of undisguised contempt for the evident alarm of the Governor, he added: "You know, Sir, if they really do rise in revolt, it is only what you are wishing for."

"I am perfectly aware of that, Lysias; but not at the present moment, when there are three millions in the town, come to keep the Feast, and who would overwhelm us by their superiority of numbers. I am not such an ass. At any rate I would have them wait until Cestius Gallus arrives with his cohorts. Then perhaps we might make our way out to Caesarea. But who are they bringing us here? Who is the prisoner?"

"Pardon me, Procurator," said the Centurion Lucius, "for having forgotten to mention our little adventure in my haste to deliver my message." He then briefly re-

lated the engagement with the bandits, concluding with the words: "Their leader, whom with the assistance of my Decurion I contrived to arrest, asserts that he is the notorious Ben Gioras, on whose head a price of twenty thousand sesterii is set."

"Ben Gioras!" ejaculated Gessius Florus, and his eyes glistened, for he was already calculating in his covetous soul that a large ransom would be offered for this prize. "I am right glad, young man, that you have apprehended this rogue, if indeed he is the man he pretends to be. But as for the twenty thousand sesterii, which you suppose to be set on his head, you have been strangely deceived. Wherever could I get such a sum?"

"The Centurion is not mistaken," interposed Lysias not without a touch of malice. "You yourself set that sum on Ben Gioras' head; it has been posted up on every gate in Jerusalem for ever such a time."

"Then my secretary was in error, and the lictor shall cut off his hand for his carelessness!" exclaimed Gessius, casting a sinister glance at the tribune.

But Lysias was not so easily put out of countenance; he repeated: "Twenty thousand sesterii was the amount. I was present when you dictated the notice to your scribe."

"Then I must have been drinking. Two hundred perhaps, or at most two thousand! You must be content with that, Centurion. What is your name? We will fix it at that sum then, two thousand sesterii, and by the divine Nero, that is not an amount to be sneezed at."

"My name is Lucius Flavus, noble Sir," the Centurion replied, ashamed at the greed of the Governor, who tried to beat him down like an old Jew rag-dealer. "I regret to say that I must insist on receiving the whole of the sum promised, as it is my duty to uphold the rights of my soldiers, who have an equal claim to the money. And if you refuse to give us what is our right, I shall appeal to Cestius Gallus."

"Well done, my young friend. A Roman should always stand up for his rights," said the tribune Lysias. The Governor however cast a venomous look at Lucius, muttering: "Perhaps you had better go direct to the

Emperor? — Well, well, presently we will settle the matter amicably. Here comes the prisoner."

In the meantime the iron gates of the outer town-wall had been closed, to the great satisfaction of the Governor, and the ramparts manned with soldiers. Not until this was done was Ben Gioras taken off his horse, to which he had been bound, and led before Florus. Two soldiers with drawn swords conducted him to the foot of the steps.

The man, broad-shouldered, of gigantic stature, stood in an attitude of defiance before the Procurator, looking him in the face with a sinister expression.

"Are you really the notorious Ben Gioras?" inquired Florus. "Deny it if you can with truth; it would be well both for you and for me if you were to assert that you were — well let us say his brother."

"To do that would be no gain either to you or to me. Not to me, because you would immediately proceed to crucify all the other *sicarii*, nor to you, because you would not have half as large a ransom offered you for any one else."

"Impudent rascal! How can you dare to make proposals to a Roman official, a Roman judge? By Minos and the regions where he reigns you shall be crucified and your tortures increased sevenfold!"

"You cannot have me crucified either today or tomorrow, on account of the Passover," Ben Gioras answered. "And by the day after tomorrow you may have come to a better mind."

"Away with him! Put him in the safest dungeon! And you, Centurion Lucius, must see that the rogue is kept in strictest custody. As true as I stand here, not a single copper *as* shall you have if he escapes from us again; what is more, you shall answer for your prisoner with your own head."

In accordance with these commands, Lucius put himself at the head of the guard, and conducted Ben Gioras to the dungeons which were beneath Herod's palace. Numerous and dreary were the vaults which the tyrant had had constructed beneath his royal residence. The warders came forward with lighted torches to show the

soldiers the way. A long flight of steps hewn in the rock led down to these vaults. The chief gaoler unlocked an iron gate, that opened into a subteranean gallery, at the far end of which, after passing several other doors, one came to a particularly low door, heavily plated with iron, which admitted the party into a tolerably roomy vault. Bound hand and foot, the bandit was chained with a double chain to an iron ring, which was fastened into the wall. The unfortunate man could scarcely move an inch from the heap of straw which was his only resting-place.

"Well sir, do you think your bird is safe in this cage?" the grey-headed gaoler inquired, with a grim smile. Lucius replied that he saw no possibility for any one to escape, even if the four gates through which one must pass to get out into the town, were left open.

The chief gaoler nodded, then he said: "And yet once a prisoner slipped through my fingers out of this very same cell, and though he was chained up just in the same way as this fellow here. And on each side of him were two armed soldiers, who never let him out of their sight for a moment, and two other sentinels armed, kept guard at the doors there. And the four men on guard were regularly relieved by four others; for King Herod Agrippa—it was the father of the present king—had entrusted sixteen men with the charge of the prisoner. And yet—would you credit such a thing?—although he was so strictly guarded, the man actually got away in the night before the day on which he was to have been executed!"<sup>1)</sup>

"You are telling me a fool's tale, my good man," replied the Centurion with an incredulous smile.

"You may well say that!" the gaoler went on. "It happened almost exactly twenty-two years ago, for it was at Easter time in the last year of the late king's reign, who like his father before him, was eaten alive of worms. But what I tell you occurred before my eyes, as true as I stand here. It was done through the black art. You may believe it or not: but all at once, in the

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<sup>1)</sup> Acts of the Apostles, ch. 12.

middle of the night, a bright light shone in the dungeon; the chains fell off from the prisoner's hands and feet, the soldiers felt as it were paralysed; at the command of an unseen being the liberated prisoner put on his garments quite leisurely and fastened his sandals on his feet; then the iron gates one after another opened to them of their own accord and the man, going by the keepers passed out into the street, accompanied by the bright light, and he was gone!"

"No doubt you and the keepers invented this story to escape punishment, you must have been well bribed by the prisoner's friends," said the Centurion, looking as incredulous as ever.

"That is what his late Majesty said," the gaoler continued, "and it would have gone ill with the guard and with me, if the worms had not attacked him just at the right moment. His son—whom may God in His mercy preserve from the malady of this royal house—finally believed me on my oath, and reinstated me in my office, which I have retained under all the different governors who for some years past have resided in the old king's palace."

"And who was the magician who under your very eyes was released out of this vault by preternatural agency?"

"It was a man named Simon, or Cephas, some called him, that means a rock in the Latin tongue. He was the head of the new sect, founded by one Jesus of Nazareth. I was a mere lad when the Nazarite was crucified, I carried the basket containing the hammer and nails to the place of execution. He must have been an arch-conjurer for he healed my father's ear by merely touching it with his finger. That man Cephas, who was got out of prison by magic, had struck off the ear when they went to arrest his master. And with one word he made all the soldiers who surrounded him fall flat on the ground. But I should never have done, Sir, if I were to tell you all the wonders that man worked. And at his death what happened! Pitch darkness and an earthquake. I was so terrified that I ran straight off home! And when I got there, who should meet me—believe it or not as you please—but my grandfather, who had

been dead a long time, in his shroud, shaking his bony fist at me, for having taken part in the execution of that Nazarite!"

"Are not the members of this new Jewish sect also called Christians?" inquired Lucius, who remembered having heard some such people mentioned in Rome, as the adherents of a mad sect, who practised the most revolting ceremonies and had made a compact with the powers of hell. The Centurion was a child of his day, and naturally believed in all the dark superstitious practices carried on at that time in Rome, principally by Egyptian and Chaldaic astrologers and magicians. Therefore when the gaoler confirmed his surmise that the followers of the Nazarite bore the name of Christians, he was strongly inclined to attribute all he had just heard to the influence of magic arts.

"For the matter of that," he said to the gaoler, who meanwhile had locked the iron door behind him and lighted him up the steps, "it would scarcely be pleasant for me if this Ben Gioras should prove to be a Christian, and by means of his black art make good his escape. The Procurator made me answerable with my head for the rogue's safety."

"Oh, as far as that goes you need have no anxiety, Centurion," the old man assured him. "Not among all the Nazarites that have ever come under my care, was there a single highwayman, assassin or thief. In fact no other crime has been laid to their charge than that they believe that the one who was crucified rose again from the dead, and that of a truth is worse than anything wicked, it is so utterly stupid."

"Well then, my good man, look sharp after this rascal, and mind he does not give us the slip," Lucius said, as he moved off, after slipping a piece of gold into the chief gaoler's hand. "What is your name?"

"Melech, Sir, at your service, or Malchus, as the Romans call me. I have the same name as my father, whose ear, as I told you, Cephas cut off. I can tell you who will give you all the details of the occurrence, if you care to look him up. He is doorkeeper to one Nicanor, at King David's house yonder; that is to say he is a

pensioner on his charity, for the poor man can hardly use his legs now. — But what do I see! the Centurion has given me a gold *denar*! Here, young Sir, a word more, if you please. I should be sorry if you came to any harm about this prisoner. It is quite possible that he may have disappeared before to-morrow, provided some one presents the Governor with a very heavy gold key. I just mention the chance to you, that you may be on the spot—but do not betray me. The Governor often makes lucrative arrangements of the sort. His predecessors in office did just the same. Albinus emptied the prisons when he had to give place to Florus; he permitted the relatives of the criminals to redeem them for money; those who could not pay him well were beheaded or crucified.<sup>1)</sup> That is what they all do, even Festus was no exception.”

Lucius thanked the grey-haired old man for the hint, and went in no very cheerful state of mind towards the cloisters which surrounded the palace on the garden-side. He was disgusted to find that the highest Roman officials with whom he was here brought again into close contact, were open to bribery. He was almost ashamed of being a Roman.

He was joined by the tribune Clandius Lysias, and to this officer, who was considerably his senior in years, he spoke quite openly about the scandalous traffic carried on by the legates and governors. Lysias fully agreed with him, but warned him to keep his opinions, however just they were, to himself.

“The Procurator does not seem to like you too well, as you have doubtless already remarked. And if he heard you speak as you did just now, he would be certain to revenge himself on you,” said Lysias, drawing the Centurion into the garden.

“What do I care about the favour or disfavour of this upstart from Asia Minor?” replied Lucius, with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders. “I am not a Jew, but a Roman knight, the son of a highly respected Senator and Officer under Cestius Gallus, to whom no Procurator of Judea can lay down the law.”

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Josephus, Wars of the Jews II. 14. 1.

"That is all very true. But through his wife, this man is more influential at the Court than Cestius Gallus. There is no doubt that Florus exploits this province most shamelessly. Marcus Tullius could write just as highly-spiced a book about him as about Verres, only Florus cannot spoil the images of the gods here, because the Jews have none. But the Emperor and the Senate wink at such proceedings, so long as he leaves them the lion's share of the plunder. I do not believe that the Legate will institute a serious investigation into the manner in which the Governor has ruled the province."

"The only thing is, it is said that he is driving the Jews to desperation, and in consequence of his reckless government a general uprising of the people is imminent. And that certainly would be unwelcome to the Emperor! Our legions have already enough to do in the West, in the newly-conquered British isles, in the Rhineland. If war broke out in the East, and the Asiatic nations, and the wandering tribes of the desert allied themselves with these stiff-necked Jews, ours would be an evil case."

"There would be much bloodshed, and this city with its temple would become a heap of ruins, but the Roman Eagle would triumph yet," answered the Tribune. "And perhaps Gessius Florus is not so far wrong, if he tries to bring about such a catastrophe. No doubt he only thinks of escaping the inquiry which he greatly dreads. But in this instance the Roman Empire goes hand in hand with his private interests. The Jewish nation with its own peculiar creed will never be amalgamated with the Roman State. It must therefore cease to exist as a nation."

"That seems strange," replied the Centurion. "Rome has recognized all other religions and other divinities, and built temples and altars for strange gods. Only towards this unseen God of the Jews does it assume a hostile position."

"Because their Deity tolerates no other beside Himself. Jupiter and Juno may be somewhat jealous of Isis and Osiris, of Baal and Astarte, of Thor and Freya, but they put up with them as inferior deities. But this God of the Jews will be God alone: there must be no



other gods beside Him; all else are false and lying divinities."

"This God of the Jews will feel Jupiter's power some day," exclaimed the Centurion. "And this accursed sect of Christians, of which I have heard repeatedly of late, do they worship this same jealous God?"

His companion replied in the affirmative, adding after a moment's silence: "You call them accursed, probably because you credit the accusation brought against them by Nero, of having originated the conflagration which destroyed a great part of Rome a year ago?"

"No, we all know the Emperor did that himself, to have a pretext for rebuilding the city on a grander scale according to his own taste. It is an open secret in Rome. It was only to deceive the populace that he put the blame on the Christians. And how barbarously he acted towards them! Hundreds of them were burnt as living torches in the Agrippine Gardens on the Vatican Hill. It makes me shudder to think of it. Yet they deserved it because of the abominable mysteries and infernal magical arts they practise, as some of the best-informed men in Rome tell me."

"Yes, the most incredible reports are spread about them. But when were our haruspices, or the Priests of Isis blamed for their practices? I do not believe that the Christians with their mysteries have any such shameful performances. A few years ago I made the acquaintance of one of the chiefs of this sect, one Saul, or Paul, a Roman citizen from Tarsus in Cilicia. I was the means of saving his life; for he would have been torn to pieces by the Jews in the temple over there, if I had not come down from the Antonia with the soldiers to rescue him. He was a small, insignificant looking man, but such eyes as he had! And his eloquence! The words flowed from his lips like a stream; every thing he said had an irresistible power, and evidently bore the stamp of the most heartfelt conviction. I sent him under a strong escort, for his adversaries had bound themselves by an oath to kill him, to Cesarea, to Felix the Governor. And then I heard him in the presence of Felix and of his wife Drusilla, speak of God, of the immortality of

the soul, of the judgment to come, as I never in all my life heard any man speak. Not only Drusilla, but the cynical Felix himself, trembled and were terrified at the truths proclaimed in their ears, for I assure you, the little man did not hesitate to speak out boldly, and call the relationship between Felix and Drusilla by its right name. Later on I was present when he pleaded his cause so eloquently before Festus the Governor, King Agrippa and his sister Berenice, that the King exclaimed: "In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian." I myself was then half inclined to embrace the Christian faith. A creed that could inspire its adherents with such courage as that man Paul possessed, and which I could not help admiring, would not be unworthy of a Roman soldier's belief, and certainly superior to the cultus of Jupiter and—"

"Stop, stop, remember that to Jupiter we owe the triumph of our eagles and our world-wide dominion! If we are to remain friends, you must not say a derogatory word of him. I know quite well what you were going to say: he has his vices, or at any rate our poets have thought proper to attribute them to him. But in that he only shows himself to be a true Roman; we are no saints ourselves. So far as I go leave Jupiter Capitolinus alone, to hurl his thunderbolts as he pleases.—Listen, what is that?"

Both the officers looked in the direction of the temple, which in the light of the setting sun, was a conspicuous object, seen above the flat roofs of the town. A cloud of smoke, rising from the altar of incense, hung about its gleaming walls. And at that moment a pale-blue cloud, mounting high above the golden roof, diffused a delightful perfume over the whole city, while the solemn blast of trumpets repeated nine times, proclaimed the hour of the evening sacrifice, and the approach of the great Feast of the Passover.

"What is the meaning of that?" the Centurion asked his companion.

"The High-Priest is now laying the offering of incense on the altar in the Holy Place, pounds of the choicest incense from the far East. And while the

fragrant smoke ascends to Heaven symbolizing the supplications of the people, thousands and thousands of voices chant psalms, and the worshippers join in prayer with the Priests. It must be acknowledged that this sounds more devotional than the hoarse roar of the bull that our Flamen immolates in honour of Jupiter Capitolinus — do you not think so ?

“You are half a Jew yourself, Tribune! But what are the martial strains that mingle so triumphantly with the sacred chants and trumpets of the temple? Aha, it is the familiar sound of our own military band! The Legate is entering Jerusalem with his cohorts. Come, let us hasten to meet and salute him.”

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## CHAPTER 8.

### The House where Mary dwelt.

Eusebius' two nieces, Martha and Miriam, or Mary, lived with Parmenas their father in Pella in the country east of the Jordan; they had come with him for the first time to Jerusalem, in order to worship in the temple and assist at the Paschal ceremonies. Their father had left them in his elder brother's house in Bethania, both because the two girls would be much more comfortable there than in the city, over-crowded as it then was with strangers, and also because his own time would be taken up by transactions of an important nature with the venerable bishop Simeon.

Of course on the very first day the two sisters had been taken to see the temple. But as they were fervent Christians, they desired most of all to visit the holy places which the Redeemer hallowed in the course of His sacred Passion, and for this expedition Good Friday had been chosen, as being the most suitable day. Eusebius did not think that it was necessary to give up this project on account of the Rabbi Sadoc.

"I cannot do anything for the wounded man at present," he said to Salome. "His daughter can give him the cooling potion, when the hour-glass has run out, and you can render her any assistance she may need. I hope to be back before night. I shall leave Martha and Miriam at Seraphia's house; from there it will be quite easy for them to attend the services at night and in the early morning, and to receive the Holy Mysteries, if our venerable bishop deems them worthy of that privilege. I should be glad enough to do the same! But my presence is required here on account of the sick Rabbi and his daughter, and we know that in God's sight charity to our neighbour is no less acceptable than participation in the Holy Sacrifice."

Eusebius visited his patient once more, then he left his quiet home at Bethania without any anxiety, taking the two maidens with him.

All three followed the way of our Lord's Passion from the Garden of Gethsemane to the Pretorium in a spirit of pious recollection. Eusebius pointed out the principal places of interest to his nieces, adding a few sentences of devout appreciation of the charity of the suffering Saviour. The Pretorium was on the north side of the Antonia fortress, and was garrisoned by the soldiery.

"I stood leaning against that pillar yonder," Eusebius said in an undertone to the girls. "The High-Priests stood out there; from the stone gallery above the Governor argued with them, and more than once declared our Lord to be innocent of the charges brought against Him. He, the Lamb of God, was repeatedly dragged up and down that flight of steps. Over there is the pillar at which He was scourged so mercilessly for our sins—I fancy I still hear the sound of the rods, and the low moaning of the sufferer! Then they led Him into the inner court you see there; the soldiers were all assembled there, the uproar and roars of rude laughter were heard over here. Presently they brought Him out crowned with thorns, and arrayed in an old military cloak, they meanwhile shouting: Hail, King of the Jews! His appearance was so heart-rending that Pilate, the stern Roman, thought if he showed him in that condition to the multitude, they would be moved to compassion. He did so, and we all cried—alas! I too joined in that fatal cry—Away with Him! Crucify Him! His blood be on us and our children!"

"O Uncle, He has forgiven you that long ago," said Miriam soothingly.

"Yes, child, our Lord is merciful, and has taken away the guilt of our sins. That does not however prevent us from remembering that we committed them, and we ought to bewail them. But we must not tarry any longer here. I see we have already attracted the notice of some Pharisees."

In fact a group of men, who were tying on their

phylacteries at an opposite corner of the street, had observed the old man and the two women, and they now raised the cry: "Nazarites! Mourning for the loss of the beloved carpenter's son! Bring them before the Council! Stone them!"

Little is needed, especially in the festival time, to arouse the fanaticism of the Jewish populace. Immediately a crowd formed and rushed upon Eusebius and his nieces with menacing shouts. They were compelled to fly for shelter into the court of the Pretorium, and crave the protection of the Roman guard.

But there they seemed likely to fare worse than when exposed to the blows and insults of the mob. The rough soldiers dragged them into the interior of the guardhouse, pulled the girls' veils from their faces and indulged in all manner of coarse jokes.

With tears in her eyes Martha was struggling to get free from the arm of a soldier who laid hold of her by the waist, when as if sent by Heaven, Martius the decurion made his appearance in the guardroom. He recognized Eusebius at a glance, and exclaimed: "Hullo, comrades, what is going on here? Stop that, if you please! That is a man to be respected; as sure as I am a decurion of the twelfth legion, whoever offers any insult to him or his children will have a little business to settle with me!"

The bearded soldiers from the Sabine mountains would fain have pushed their jokes a little farther, but regard for the grey-headed decurion, whose courage was well known, held them back. Martius conducted his friends through several colonnades and across various courts till they came to one of the gates of the Antonia and through that obtained access to the outer court of the temple. There he parted from them, after asking kindly after the wounded Rabbi and his beautiful daughter. "I would accompany you further," he said, "only I do not want to get into trouble with the guard of the temple a second time today. Farewell, and greet those at home from me!"

Eusebius and his nieces called down the richest blessings of Heaven on Martius for his timely succour.

They then sought to make their way through the crowds of pilgrims to the bridge leading to the Upper City. Before the gates of the inner temple, standing in long rows, thousands of fathers of families might be seen, each holding the Paschal lamb in his arms, waiting his turn to come up to the marble table whereon the little animal, carefully cleansed and without blemish, was to be slain. "He shall be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and he shall not open His mouth," Miriam whispered to her sister. Hundreds of Priests in white vestments handed the blood of the victims, in golden or silver bowls, passing them on from one to the other, up to the altar of sacrifice, where it was poured out. "Streams of blood, which would have no power to wash away one single sin, but for the sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb," said Eusebius in a low tone.

He did not pass by the East gate, which on account of its magnificent folding gates of Corinthian bronze was called the Corinthian, or the Beautiful Gate, without entering for a while with his nieces in the outer Court of the Women, in order to offer special worship to God looking towards the Holy of Holies. For even after the death of Christ, as long as the temple remained standing, God was in a special manner present in the house dedicated to His service. We read that Peter and John went up thither to pray, after our Lord's Ascension, and it was there that they healed the man lame from his birth. Paul also went up to the temple to worship, whenever he was in Jerusalem, and it is said that James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, was almost constantly in the temple at prayer, and it was there that he was martyred. The two sisters passed in devout silence through the lofty bronze gates which were fifty cubits — over eighty-three feet — in height, and looked reverently towards the veil of the sanctuary, which in its brilliant and varied colours was discernible through the intervening portals of the Court of the Men and the holy place, over the sea of heads formed by the thousands of worshippers. In the outer Court of the Priests the fire upon the principal altar of sacrifice burnt high; the sisters could not see it from the spot where they were standing, but the flames were reflected in the rich gilding of walls and

pillars, which they lit up with a crimson glow, while a thick column of smoke rose high above the roof, giving to the winds the odours arising from the burning fat of the sacrificial victims.

When at length they quitted the temple, and had got as far as the bridge, they involuntarily turned to look once more at the superb structure behind them. In a low voice Martha asked her Uncle whether all that splendour would really be destroyed.

"Eternal Truth has declared that not one stone will be left upon another," was the reply.

"And do you think," Miriam inquired, "that a temple will ever be built in honour of the Lamb that was slain, which can compare with this one?"

"When once the holy Truth of Christ has conquered the world, not one, but thousands and thousands of temples will be raised, and many of them will be more beautiful even than Solomon's temple," Eusebius said as they went onwards. "And even now I prefer our poor little chapel on Mount Sion, for in it we have that in truth and reality whereof only the type and foreshadow is found on Mount Moria. Can it be supposed that the fumes arising from those sacrifices of flesh and blood can compete with the pure, fragrant, unbloody oblation of the New Covenant?"

In spite of the alarm occasioned by the occurrences in the Pretorium, the two girls entreated their uncle to accompany them to the other scenes of the Saviour's Passion. Eusebius however judged it more prudent not to expose them a second time to an outburst of rage on the part of the fanatical Jews. "The fury of these poor blinded creatures against everything christian appears to me to wax greater year by year," he said. "May it please God to bend their stubborn will at last!"

Accordingly he conducted his charges to the house where Seraphia (Veronica) lived; rather a small building standing in a garden shut in by a high wall, near the western portion of the city-wall. This simple dwelling had been hallowed by the presence of Mary, the immaculate Mother of our Lord; it having been her abode during the last few years of her life, after she left her home in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, prompted



by the loving desire to revisit once more the spot where her divine Son had suffered and died upon the cross. It was now the property of the Christian community in Jerusalem, and the aged Seraphia was there as caretaker. Paulina, the sister of St. Paul lived there with her, besides one or two other pious women who sought, after the example of the Mother of God, to dedicate their life to the service of God by prayer and contemplation.

Thither Eusebius took his two nieces.

"How pleasant the little house looks with all the flowers standing in the shade of the old fig-tree," Martha exclaimed. "And look, there is a whole crowd of snow-white doves fluttering around the roof. They spread out their tails like part of a wheel! I never saw such beautiful doves before!"

"Those doves belonged to the Mother of our Lord," Eusebius said. "She used to take care of them, and feed them with her own hands. They are so tame that they are in the habit of pecking the grains of corn out of Seraphia's and Paulina's hands. I once heard it said that our Blessed Lady told Paulina that the doves would one day save the lives of the inhabitants of that house."

"Dear little things! But how were they to do that? See, Rhode has come to open the garden gate for us," said Miriam.

Rhode was the damsel mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (ch. 12, 13.) who opened the door to St. Peter, after his miraculous deliverance from prison. Great was her delight when Eusebius told her who the two girls were. "Come in quickly," she cried. "Paul's sister and Salome and Petronella and Anna and at least a dozen others have come to venerate the Holy Face, and afterwards to go from here to the Cenacle, as soon as it is dark, and the Jews are eating the Passover in their own houses."

The women who were assembled in the house received the two sisters most cordially. Little was said, and that in a low tone. Seraphia, now venerable with age, sat in an arm-chair, her wrinkled hands devoutly folded in her lap. Time had graven many a line about her mouth and on her forehead, but her eyes had not lost their beauty, and her countenance wore a gentle, kindly

expression. She greeted the two maidens with a quiet smile, and laid her finger on her lips, as Martha, in a childish way, was going to let her tongue loose.

"We do not talk much today, my child," the old lady whispered, "look at the image of our Lord, and if you are silent, you will hear it speak to you words of celestial love and mercy."

Thereupon she pointed to the veil which was hung upon the opposite wall, and which in a wondrously vivid manner presented to view the countenance of the suffering Saviour. The sight was one almost appalling in its truthfulness, and yet touching in its tender sadness. The forehead crowned with thorns, on each side of which the hair hung tangled and clotted with blood and sweat, the brow contracted with pain, the weary eyes, half-hidden by the swollen, heavy lids, yet beaming still with unspeakable charity, the pale and sunken cheeks, down which the blood slowly trickled, the livid lips, parted in mute complaint, the beard saturated with great drops of blood; O what a picture did this present of love and agony!

The two girls knelt down piously beside the women, and gazed at the miraculous portrait. At their request Veronica related, as she had so often done before, the account of her meeting with the Saviour bearing His cross.

"Alas!" she said, speaking almost under her breath, and keeping her eyes fixed upon the miraculous portrait, "if I lived to be a thousand years old, I should still see my Lord as vividly before my mind's eye, as when He vouchsafed to imprint His likeness upon my poor veil. Well, I was standing in my room one day in our old house not far from the Gate of Judgment, when my husband came in, bringing the dreadful tidings that Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, had been sentenced to death. I began to weep and lament, and he bade me be silent, for was it likely that I was wiser than our High-Priests and Ancients. Then I heard the noise in the streets, and the blast of trumpets, as they led Him to execution, amid the howls and curses of the mob. When I caught sight of Him staggering under the weight of the cross, I could contain myself no longer. I bade my servant bring the pitcher of wine which I had already

prepared for the Passover, and I hastened out to meet Him. What a pitiable object He was! I wished to refresh Him with a draught of wine, but the brutal executioners pushed my servant aside so roughly that half of the wine was spilt, and the remainder they themselves drank. Thus I had no means left of alleviating His sufferings. Weeping bitterly I threw myself on my knees before Him, and when I saw His countenance, disfigured by blood and sweat, I plucked my veil from my head and offered it to Him, that He might have the slight comfort at least of wiping His face. The Lord looked at me with an expression of such loving kindness in His blood-shot eyes, that a ray of sunshine seemed to fall upon my soul. With a slight smile He took the proffered cloth and pressed it to His countenance with His left hand, whilst with the right hand He steadied the heavy burden of the cross; then with a word of thanks He gave it back to me. But the High-Priests and their minions drove Him onward with blows and reproaches, and they even spat at me and struck me. I hardly know how I got back to my own chamber! When I was somewhat more composed and had dried my tears, I spread out my veil on the table, intending to fold it up, when I perceived the miracle the Lord in His mercy had worked to console me and His brethren. At first I could not believe my eyes, and thought my excited imagination was playing me false. On hearing my exclamation of astonishment my husband and the other inmates of the house came in, and confirmed the fact of the miracle by their testimony. We all fell on our knees and prayed to God and His Holy Son, whose power and loving kindness are alike infinite.—Since that time this miraculous portraiture is my greatest, my only treasure. When I die, I shall bequeath it to our Christian community to proclaim to all ages the love and compassion of the Redeemer."

Such was the narrative the old lady related in a soft, sweet voice; and when it was ended hot tears were running down her wrinkled cheeks. The women present kissed the hem of the veil with reverent fervour, and Martha and Mary did not fail to imitate them in this act of devotion.

## CHAPTER 9.

### In the Cenacle.

Meanwhile Eusebius had gone to the house in which was the upper room where the Last Supper was held. In all Jerusalem there was no chamber more sacred to the early Christians, none more deeply venerated by them than this, for it was there that Christ instituted the sacrifice of the New Dispensation, that He appeared to the Apostles in the evening of the day of His resurrection, that He endowed them with the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Thus hallowed, it became the first and most venerable of the churches of Christendom.

The Cenacle, part of which remains to this day, is situated upon Mount Sion, not far from the little house where our Blessed Lady dwelt. It forms part of an ancient, substantial building, said to have belonged originally to King David's palace, standing in a spacious courtyard and enclosed by a wall of solid masonry. On the east side a large market-place, which at the time of which we speak was filled with pilgrims who had set up in it tents and other light shelters, joined this secluded building. Eusebius experienced some difficulty in making his way through the crowds to the gate of the courtyard. It was opened to him by Sabbas the porter, who first ascertained by means of a sliding shutter that one of the brethren was without.

In a deep-pitched voice, but not unkindly manner, Sabbas, a tall, stalwart man, refused admittance to some uninvited strangers, who tried to enter with Eusebius.

"These people get more and more intrusive," he said, when the gate was again closed and locked. "I shall have to ask a few of my juniors among the brethren, sturdy young fellows, to take my place tonight, if we are to make sure of not being interrupted during the service. Malchus, good old man, has for some time been quite unfit for the post of doorkeeper."

"Well, he has filled it till now, Sabbas, and there never was any disturbance. The Lord will reward him for his faithful service," Eusebius answered, "Where is he now?"

"In his little chamber by the deacons' gate."

Thither Eusebius accordingly repaired and found the old man quite well and in good spirits. "I am all right," he said, "if I am not obliged to walk at all. I have almost entirely lost my sight, and can only recognize you, Eusebius, by your voice, so I am good for nothing. Only I can hear perfectly, as well as in my youth, with the ear which our Lord healed, so I can call Sabbas if he does not hear a knock. I pray God that it may please Him to take me soon, and give me employment at the door of Heaven."

"I am glad to find you so cheerful at eighty years of age! Is Nicanor at home?"

"Certainly he is. You will find him in his rooms."

The little house, a kind of lean-to, built on to the wall of enclosure close to the gate, formerly inhabited by the porter and some of the servants, was now made use of by the Deacons and Acolytes of Bishop Simeon, on the days when the community assembled, for the purpose of giving audience to suppliants. For since in the early days of Christianity the Christians of Jerusalem had all their property in common, the deacons who were entrusted with the administration of it, and had to apportion to each family its share, were obliged to listen to many an application and see to a great deal of business.

As usual, a good number of brethren were waiting round Nicanor's door for an audience. But they gave way to Eusebius, who was highly thought of, both on account of his personal qualities and as being the steward of one of the largest estates of the community. Eusebius thanked them, and passing on, entered Nicanor's room.

The Deacon, a vivacious little man with kind, sagacious eyes, sprang from his seat as soon as he saw the steward of the property in Bethania, exclaiming: "Is it you, Eusebius? Have you brought me some money? If you have, it will come in most opportunely. I am always glad of it, we have so many poor, and the times are so bad! Well, well, 'to the poor the Gospel is

preached.' Wait a moment, we always keep to the alphabetical order." Then turning to a stand he read the docket; Aleph, Beth: "Here is what we want: Bethania, the gift of Lazarus and his sisters." While he was engaged in taking out the roll of papyrus that he wanted, Eusebius managed at last to put in a word.

"Excuse me, worthy Nicanor, I did not come today to bring you money, but if any of our brethren are in need of relief, I can at any time place at your disposal two or three hundred shekels. My object was to ask your wise counsel in regard to something else."

"You can always command me, if I can be of any service to you," Nicanor replied, inviting Eusebius to take a seat beside him. He then listened attentively to the whole circumstantial account which the steward gave him of the events of the preceding night, and the trust reposed in him by the wounded man who was his guest.

"Now what ought I to do?" Eusebius asked when he had ended his narrative. "Shall I wait until the Rabbi either dies or is so far recovered as to be pronounced out of danger? Or would you have me at once inform Eleazar or his uncle that he is lying sick under my roof, and hand over to them the property entrusted to my safekeeping?"

"But surely you have not got the two bags with you, Eusebius?" Nicanor inquired.

"No, they are safely stored away in the cellar at Bethania, you know the place. My wife knows nothing of it. I did not think it would be prudent to carry about anything so valuable on my person, on a day when the streets are so crowded as they are now."

"You did quite right to leave the money behind you. But why did you not let Eleazar or Ezechias know the first thing this morning of the accident that befell Rabbi Sadoc?"

"You are well aware that Eleazar, and still more his father, are not in good repute. I thought it would be hardly right to take any part in helping such men as they are to gain possession of the Rabbi's daughter—she seems to me to be a very nice girl—and such a vast sum of money. Then on the other hand, I cannot venture at present to enlighten my patient as to the real

character of Caiaphas' son and grandson, because any agitation or excitement would be very bad for him. What had I better do?"

"Yes, you are quite right. Ananus must not get that money into his possession, if we can prevent it by any fair means. I know what use he would make of it, at least I have strong suspicions. He would kindle a fire with it which would put all Jerusalem in a blaze. Then there is the girl.—His son would maltreat her, just as he maltreats his wife Rachel. No, no, the marriage must not be permitted; besides it would be wrongful, since the Lord Jesus reestablished the original sanctity of marriage, and declared a plurality of wives to be unlawful. We must open Thamar's eyes as to what would be her fate, were she to place herself in that man's power."

"The question is will she believe us? Moreover a Jewish maiden cannot well run counter to her father's will, as the disposal of her hand rests with him."

"Supposing that the father died, who would have rights over her?"

"Probably Ezechias, Eleazar's uncle, as being her nearest of kin," Eusebius answered.

"Ezechias is not such a bad man. But of course he would have the credit of the family at heart. Ananus is deeply in debt, there are bonds of his to a large amount in the Xistus. However I think we should find the man manageable; I will make inquiries, as soon as the festival is over. But what if the Captain got wind of the matter before then? I fear, my dear friend, you would find yourself involved in a ticklish affair. He would betake himself with a body of his men to Bethania, and carry off the bride and her dowry by force."

The steward looked somewhat aghast. "At any rate we are safe against him until after the Feast," he replied. "And after that, if he attempts violence, we might perhaps appeal to the Governor for protection."

"Appeal to Gessius Florus? What are you thinking of? You might as well call the tiger to defend you from the wolf. I can only hope that Eleazar has not heard anything of it this afternoon, or he will be now already halfway to Bethania with his mercenaries."

"I saw him just now in the Court of the Temple."

"Then there is nothing to be feared until tomorrow evening at any rate," Nicanor replied. "In a few minutes' time the trumpets will sound the beginning of the Sabbath, and he is surely far too strict a Pharisee to be capable of violating it so egregiously. Perhaps before tomorrow evening the sick man will be so much better as to allow of your acquainting him with Eleazar's real character and circumstances. If otherwise, should his daughter resolve to escape by flight from the unjust power of her relatives, we might perchance find a refuge for her. Yet I should be reluctant to do that; it might be thought that we had an eye to her marriage portion, and we must be careful to be in good repute amongst men. Well then, my friend, go now into the sanctuary and prepare yourself for the great festival with a tranquil mind. Cast your cares upon the Lord; He will direct all things so that this work of charity may bring you a spiritual blessing. His peace be with you."

It was with a feeling of relief that Eusebius crossed the spacious courtyard and reentered the Cenacle. It was a large, solid building, oblong in shape. A colonnade of pillars of no great height ran along each of the longer sides, and a flight of steps led up to the three entrances which were in the nearest end. Eusebius, on entering the vestibule, met the venerable bishop Simeon, conducted by two brothers Rufus and Alexander. He was a son of Cleophas, who was brother to the foster-father of Jesus. On account of his being nearly related to Jesus, and one of His disciples, one too, who was a witness of the Resurrection, the Apostles had consecrated him to the see of Jerusalem, after St. James was martyred. Simeon was about seventy years of age, a vigorous old man, whose features wore an expression of kindness and of energy. His eye still gleamed with the fire of his youth, and a flowing white beard reached down to his girdle.

Eusebius reverently knelt before the bishop and kissed his hand, asking for his blessing. Simeon made the sign of the cross over him; then raising him up, he said: "Peace be with you, my son. That is the Easter



greeting which our Lord brought to us. But the world will not accept His peace. Let us prepare our hearts that He may take up His abode therein, for we can desire nothing better or sweeter than His presence.”

Eusebius then proceeded into the upper room, where the Last Supper was held. It was of medium size, perfectly simple in every respect, very little decorated, but kept in excellent order. The floor was inlaid with squares of wood, well-joined; the walls were tapestried about half-way up, and several lamps were suspended from the ceiling. The room was lighted by round windows, situated at a considerable height; the further part, answering to the Holy of holies in the temple, was shut off by a curtain. A lamp burning before a recess, indicated to the initiated the place where the Holy Eucharist was reserved. Eusebius knelt down before it to adore our hidden God.

Meanwhile evening had closed in, and the room was gradually filling with devout worshippers. The women were all closely veiled, out of respect for the angels who were present there in attendance on the Blessed Sacrament; besides this, they had a special place assigned them, railed off from that occupied by the men.

At length the time came for the Good Friday service to commence. The history of the Passion, as recorded by Matthew, was solemnly read aloud, and the venerable bishop gave a touching discourse upon the love of the dying Saviour, which was destined to conquer the world. Its first triumph had been the heroic courage manifested by the holy martyrs. In the course of the last two years, hundreds had won the palm of victory and gone to receive the martyr's crown; and the bishop described in thrilling words the cruel persecution of the Christians in Rome under Nero. In conclusion he said: “The Lord Jesus who first of all died for our salvation, gave them fortitude to lay down their lives like Stephen and James, my predecessor, in His faith and love. They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and they were victors! But we their brethren are still in the midst of warfare. Cephas, the Viceregent of our Lord and the chief Pastor of His flock, and Paul, the Light of the Gentiles, the Vessel of election, chosen to carry His

name before kings and prophets, are in daily expectation of being led to execution, and ask our prayers that they may be steadfast in the last conflict. And what, my children, can we expect? We must follow Christ to His cross, if we are to share His victory. The great tribulation which He foretold as about to come upon Jerusalem and the temple, cannot be far off. Watch therefore and pray, that our Lord may find us worthy to suffer and to die with Him, and thus to enter into His glory."

"Amen," responded his hearers, deeply touched by the address to which they had been listening.

At a sign from the bishop, the curtain which concealed the sanctuary and the altar was drawn aside. He entered there, and exhibited to the faithful the precious memorials of our Lord and of His bitter passion that were in the possession of the Christian community in Jerusalem; the seamless robe, for which the soldiers at the foot of the cross had cast lots, according to David's prophecy; the cloth that had been wrapped round His loins, saturated with His blood; the cruel nails that transfixed His hands and feet; the painful crown of thorns that encircled His royal brow; the linen shroud in which Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea wrapped His sacred body after death, and finally the veil imprinted with His portrait, brought from Veronica's house. With deep emotion the faithful contemplated and venerated these mute witnesses of the sufferings of their Saviour, which spoke to their hearts more forcibly, more directly, than the most eloquent sermon could have spoken.

By the time all had satisfied their devotion, it had grown late. Midnight was long past before the deacons could replace the treasures of the Church in their places of safekeeping. Then the bishop concluded the services of the night between Good Friday and Holy Saturday by an universal prayer.

Had the worthy Eusebius had the slightest suspicion of what was happening during that time at Bethania, he certainly would not have been able with serene composure to remain, as he did, somewhat longer on his knees in prayer in the Cenacle after the other Christians had dispersed to their several homes.

## CHAPTER 10.

### In the House of Caiaphas.

The residence of Caiaphas the High-Priest was situated in the immediate vicinity of the Cenacle. Since the day whereon Christ was sentenced to death within those walls and Peter had denied Him, the once magnificent, almost palatial house had lost more in appearance than one would have imagined possible in the course of rather more than thirty years. It was still a wide, spacious structure. The central block of buildings was encompassed by a double wall, enclosing two courtyards. The greater part of the outer one of these courts was once a garden, but this had been so entirely neglected, that the borders were overgrown with weeds, and scarcely any trace of the paths between them remained. The inner courtyard was formerly paved with polished marble tiles, many of these were now missing, others were broken, or concealed by heaps of dirt and rubbish. One of the tall pillars between which a view could be obtained from the atrium into the interior of the central building, where the Chief Council condemned Jesus to death, had fallen from its place, and lay along the ground half way into the hall of Judgment. In its fall it had shattered the chair of the High-Priest. A portion of the massive entablature above the column had also given way, leaving a yawning cleft in the wall reaching up to the flat roof. It was evident that this central building, where the official apartments of the High-Priest were situated, was no longer inhabited.

The right wing appeared to be in a better state of preservation. At the entrance an old man, the porter, was lounging, while opposite to him a man was seated on the ground, wearing the long, flowing garment of the Bedouin. He had been there some considerable time, and was waiting, with the serene resignation of the Oriental, for the master of the house to return.

"You will soon have your wish fulfilled now, good Pilgrim," the porter said. "You hear the trumpets in the temple; Ananus will be back here directly to eat the Paschal Lamb with his family, as the Lord commanded His servant Moses at the time of the exit from Egypt. You will see him face to face, but let your words be few, for I tell you, Ananus is never gifted with much patience, and today he will be hungering after the lamb."

"I thank you for the hint. My father used to say: God give you a long beard and a short tongue. But as your master will not be here just yet, permit me to ask you a few questions. Does Ananus, to whom may the God of his fathers grant much weal and little woe, live all alone in that large house?"

"There is Caiaphas, his father — but he counts for nothing now—and his son Eleazar, he lives here with Rachel his wife, whom God has cursed with sterility, and his sister Ruth, who is mentally afflicted. Then there is another of Ananus' sons living there, one Nathanael, whose merry moods are ill-suited to this melancholy house. It is all that I, and a few old servants can do to bear our lives here. Ever since that day there was the earthquake, when the Nazarite was crucified, whom the people over there condemned—and rightly condemned—as a blasphemer, an evil spell rests on this house. And you my friend, do not look to me as if you brought happiness with you. More than once I have given admission to one like you, and never did Ananus seem well-pleased afterwards."

"The tidings I come to deliver, are not my own, but the message of him who sends me, I-am only an arrow sped by his bow. However here comes the individual for whom that message is intended." So saying the Bedouin rose quickly from the base of the column at the foot of which he had been squatting, and went to meet a man who, followed by a servant, hastily entered the courtyard.

The new-comer was about fifty, but he looked quite ten years older; he stooped as he walked, and from beneath his bushy eyebrows his eyes glanced with a

shifty, suspicious expression. His dress was the ordinary attire of a rich Jew. When he caught sight of the Bedouin, he started; then turning to his servant, he said to the servant: "Go, Giezi, and take the lamb to Rachel, in order that she may prepare it in strict obedience to the law. It is without blemish, and has just been slain at the lowest step of the Temple. No one shall say that Ananus Ben Caiaphas does not fulfil every syllable of the law that the Lord gave us by His servant Moses. Tell her to be quick, for as soon as my son Eleazar returns from the temple, we will at once eat the Passover-lamb."

Ananus pretended that he had only just perceived the Bedouin, who advanced towards him with folded arms. "What is it?" he inquired. "A messenger from Sheik Mardoch? Do you bring good news or bad?"

"Your eye is keen as the eagle's and never deceives you," the Bedouin answered. "Your servant is in fact an arrow out of the quiver of the lord of the desert, who has ten thousand swift horsemen under his sway. His message is for your ear alone, my lord, and your reply shall be carried to my master's tent like a shaft from the bowstring."

Ananus conducted the Bedouin into the half-ruined colonnade. "Well?" he inquired. "Let your words be few."

"In a few words then — Simon Ben Gioras is in the hands of the Romans. Rabbi Sadoc is severely wounded; he is in the house of that man at Bethania, whom the prophet of Nazareth once—"

"Hold your tongue about your prophet who was publicly executed," interposed Caiaphas' son, "we want no carpenter's son for our Messiah. Now go on, you bird of ill-omen."

"And the Rabbi's son is in the power of my master."

"He is? Why did you not bring him with you? And what has become of the Rabbi's daughter, and all his property?"

"The daughter is with her father, she is nursing him, as behoves a good daughter; she is said to be beautiful as the dawn on the mountains of Hauran! Perhaps my Sheik will take her to his tent as his bride—O my lord,

leave your dagger at rest; you will find no other messenger who can take your reply to my master—I thought you had no interest in your son's affianced bride, as her dowry is probably lost."

"Lost!"

"Yes, for if the Romans have not been beforehand with us, our horsemen will have reached Bethania in time to secure it, not for you, but for our Sheik."

"And that is what you call a brotherly covenant! But of course, the sons of Esau have ever deceived the children of Jacob."

"I thought it was Jacob who in the first instance deceived our father Esau," said the Bedouin. "But be reasonable; I do not know in the least whether the Rabbi's daughter is in our Sheik's hands, or whether the Romans carried her off. They will drive a hard bargain with that blossom of the stem of Levi."

"Florus is quite capable of that, and I could almost wish him to do it. It would at last bring matters to a crisis. A daughter of Israel carried off and sold into slavery—that would be enough to make the blood boil in the veins of the coldest in the Council. Her brother then, is not yet in your power, otherwise you would have brought him with you today."

"Pardon me, little Benjamin is in safe custody in our camp at the lone ilex. And the Sheik bids me say that he will let you know the conditions upon which the youthful heir of the wealthy Rabbi shall be surrendered to you, as soon as Ben Gioras is set at liberty."

"Ben Gioras? What have I to do with him? He may pay the penalty of all his misdeeds and of his folly."

"Simon Ben Gioras, the Chief of the Confederation! Is not his the strongest arm, his the sharpest sword, if it comes to open war with the Romans?"

"For the matter of that another chief would be forthcoming, and one arm more or less is of no significance," Ananus replied. "Give that message to your Sheik, and tell him I care nothing at all about the boy, unless I get his sister for my daughter-in-law. And without the Rabbi's fortune it will be quite impossible for us to conclude an alliance with the kings of Comagene of

Pontus and of Armenia, and with the Parthians and Persians. Go and tell him that with a curse from me, if blended by his petty avarice, he ruins our common projects of vengeance."

The Bedouin made a low obeisance and departed. Ananus seated himself on the fallen column, to think over the situation. A sinister frown clouded his brow. The failure of Ben Gioras' attempt upon Rabbi Sadoc threatened to upset the plan he had formed to avert ruin from his house and from his nation. It was in fact, as the porter had said; since the hour when the column whereon he was sitting gave way, fortune seemed to have deserted his father's house. A succession of unsuccessful mercantile transactions had almost exhausted Caiaphas, finances; his pride had been wounded by his being deposed from the office of High-Priest; he was moreover tortured by the reproaches of his conscience, though his haughty nature would not stoop to procure alleviation by acknowledging his guilt. At last he had become a victim of gloomy despair; his mind gave way and the unhappy man was so violent that he had to be placed in irons and kept in close confinement.

Ben Caiaphas' hopes all centered in his son, who had just ripened into manhood. He was a fine handsome figure, like a hero of antiquity, and when only twenty years old he was appointed Captain of the Temple guard. If this son, Eleazar, married money, Ananus could pay his creditors. The young man was irascible, proud and overbearing in his manner, but he had not a bad heart. Consequently he had consented, in order to help his father out of his embarrassment and keep up the credit of his house, to marry Rachel, the kindhearted but by no means beautiful daughter of Aminadab, who was considered to be one of the richest Jewish traders in Alexandria. But here again misfortune befell Caiaphas' family. No sooner were the espousals concluded, than six vessels laden with corn, the property of Rachel's father, were wrecked off the coast near Joppa, and with them he lost the bulk of his wealth.

Since that time Ananus had experienced difficulty in keeping his creditors at bay, and ever and anon fresh

notes bearing his signature found their way into the archives of the Xyst, where officially attested bonds were deposited. The desperate state of his exchequer had driven him to ally himself with the *Sicarii*; for nothing but the outbreak of the long-contemplated insurrection seemed to hold out any hope to him. Eleazar had declined to enter into alliance with the *Sicarii*; but he stood at the head of the Zealots, who were not less eager for the rising to take place, though they intended to carry on the conflict with more honourable weapons. Eleazar was given to posing for a hero of the time of the Machabees, clad in whose armour he had confronted the Romans that day at the Golden Gate. On account of this Ananus thought his son somewhat of a visionary, yet he hoped to make use of him to induce the powerful faction of the Zealots to act in concert with the *Sicarii*.

In the interim, however, his affairs had grown more desperate, but a few months previous to the time of which we are speaking, a sudden ray of hope broke in on him. He heard of the great wealth possessed by Rabbi Sadoc, a distant relative who lived in Antioch, and whose family consisted of one daughter and a little son several years her junior. Eleazar was a married man, it was true, but his marriage was childless and unhappy, and how easy was it for a husband to give his wife a writing of divorce. Ananus proposed this to his son, who caught at it eagerly, when he was informed that the Rabbi's daughter was as beautiful as she was rich. His unfortunate wife might cry her eyes out, if she choose; as for him, he hated her. Ezechias, the former High-Priest, brother-in-law to Ananus, was deputed to ask the hand of the wealthy Rabbi's daughter on behalf of his nephew. He undertook this office right willingly, for he hoped thereby to gain Eleazar for the moderate party, to which he himself belonged, for all in Jerusalem who had any property to lose, were averse to war with the Romans. Besides Ezechias was desirous of inducing Rabbi Sadoc to remove to Jerusalem, feeling certain that before long he would be made High-Priest, an appointment which would be a blessing for the whole nation. It was long since Jerusalem had had



a High-Priest equal to this Rabbi in learning and in wealth. All these reasons combined to induce Ezechias gladly to undertake the task of wooing his nephew's bride, and he was able shortly to announce to Ananus that the Rabbi, bringing with him his children and a considerable portion of his property, was coming up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover.

But Ananus calculated for himself, and came to the decision that it would be better for his own interests and those of his party, that the learned and esteemed Rabbi should vanish from the scene. The reasons for this opinion we have already heard, while listening with Benjamin to the conversation of the bandits under the ilex-tree. The only incorrect statement was that Eleazar was privy to the criminal act. He would never have given his consent to it; as for Ananus, a deed of violence more or less was a matter of perfect indifference to him. And now he had the mortification of hearing that the whole scheme had proved a miserable failure.

Whilst Ananus, seated on the fallen shaft, was pondering upon these matters in no very amiable mood, he saw his son Eleazar enter the courtyard from the street, accompanied by a few armed men. He walked quickly, and there was an angry light in his eye, as he exclaimed: "It is a wonder that fire does not fall from heaven upon these accursed Romans, who dare to disturb the peace of the Sabbath with the fanfare of their military trumpets and the entry of their cohorts. But it serves us right, cowards that we are, and we can expect nothing better until the last of these wiseacres and preachers of caution is got rid of out of the Sanhedrim. Am I not right, friends, and should we not do better to cut the throats of the whole Roman garrison than to slaughter hundreds and thousands of Paschal lambs? I believe it would be a far more agreeable sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts. What a white-livered lot we are!"

"Not all of us, Eleazar," said the officer who had stopped Lucius at the Golden Gate that very morning, "not all; we Zealots are not poltroons."

"Well then it is high time for us to bestir ourselves. A meeting of the Council has hastily been convened for

tomorrow in the early morning, although it is the Sabbath. They want to concoct some new plaister, these Doctors and Fathers of Israel, and get the Legate to lay it on the cancer that is killing the nation, that man Florus. It is of no use to daub it with ointment, it must be cut out and cauterised!"

"One word, Eleazar," said Ananus, beckoning his son to come aside. The young man hesitated a moment, then leaving his comrades he stepped close to his father, asking in no very respectful manner, "Well, what do you want?"

In a few words Ananus acquainted him with the bad news, without of course letting him know that he himself had made a bargain with Ben Gioras. "Now what can we do to get possession of these children?" he inquired when the tale was told.

"That is very plain," Eleazar replied. "At any rate we must be beforehand with that jackal of the desert, Sheik Mardoeh. I will saddle my nag directly and ride over to Bethania."

"The great Sabbath will begin shortly, and you know that an expedition like that is quite unlawful," Ananus rejoined.

"A fig for your scruples; I know very well what camels you swallow."

"But just think, you would have to pay for such a flagrant violation of the law with the loss of your post as Captain of the Guard, and I am sure you would not like that," persisted Ananus.

"No, by Heaven, I should not," exclaimed Eleazar, stamping his foot angrily on the ground. "But it enrages me to think that this bird of prey from the desert, or that hateful Governor should carry off this dove with golden plumage—it shall not be! I know what I will do, and were it ten times over a violation of the law, I must and will do it. Giezi shall go over to Bethania tonight with a troop of our Guard. I will quiet their consciences with a handful of shekels, and later on I will have a sacrifice of expiation and purification offered for them in the temple. But evening is coming on, the hour for eating the Passover will be proclaimed from the temple directly, and here am I still wearing my armour."

Away he went at a rapid pace, without taking any further notice of his father, and entered the wing of the house which showed signs of being still inhabited. There he shouted impatiently for his wife Rachel, on finding she was not there to meet him. In her place his younger brother Nathanael, a handsome boy with dark curly hair, came running up, saying: "Have a moment's patience, brother, she is just making that sweetmeat with figs, almonds and lemon, which I like so much."

"Ruth can do that, or old Selma. Tell her when the husband calls, it is the wife's duty to come at once." Eleazar answered imperiously. "I want her to help me to unbuckle my armour and to lay my robes ready for me."

"There they are, all laid out in readiness. And I can unbuckle your armour for you, I have often done it, and I like doing it. The Romans must have been offending you again Eleazar, you seem so ruffled. I was very angry with them too, when I heard their martial music break in upon the sacred sound of our trumpets. May the Lord execute vengeance on the wretches! But now be good humoured and do not eternally find fault with Rachel; she has certainly baked some wonderfully nice *mazzoth* and made an excellent *cheroset*!"

At that moment Rachel herself came in, and fell on her knees before her exacting husband. "Forgive me," she said, "I really could not come sooner, I was obliged to turn the cakes out upon the dishes."

The speaker was at least ten years older than Eleazar, and with her care-worn countenance and round shoulders looked ill-suited to be the consort of a man so well set-up as the Captain of the Temple-guard. But her countenance was redeemed by really fine eyes, of a soft brown colour, the expression of which bespoke true kindness of heart.

"You go to Ruth, Nathanael, I have something to say to my wife which is not intended for your ears," Eleazar said; and the boy went away, vexed to hear the cold way in which his brother spoke to Rachel, who had been a second mother to him. Nathanael would not have felt as much hurt, if he had begun to scold her.

Rachel too, who knew what that icy manner boded, was frightened, and raised her eyes with a timid, deprecatory look to her irascible husband, to whom she was devotedly attached, although he treated her so unkindly. There are people like that, whose affection cannot be alienated from its object, and poor Rachel in her humility was always ready to take all the blame of the unfortunate dissension between them on herself. "If I could make some sacrifice of sufficient magnitude to win his love!"

It was as if Eleazar had read these thoughts in his wife's eyes, for he said to her: "Rachel, you know that our marriage has brought on me nothing but disagreeables. The dowry I was led to expect, and which I needed to restore the ancient prestige of our house, was not forthcoming; you have borne me no children; when I return from my duties in the temple, no domestic happiness awaits me, there is scarcely a day when I have not to find fault about something, and always with justice. You dare not deny it, you know I would not stand that! Now do not you wonder that I have not availed myself of the privilege conceded by the law of Moses, and given you long ago a bill of divorce?"

Rachel turned pale, and her eyes filled with tears. She exclaimed: "O Eleazar? my beloved husband, how can you wound my heart with such cruel words, just before we are going to eat the Paschal Lamb together!"

"What has the Paschal Lamb to do with the bill of divorce which I positively mean to give you tomorrow, unless you do what I want without hesitation. Listen; I am quite determined to take another wife who will give me all that I look in vain from you; riches, position, children, a happy home, and over and above all, wealth which will procure for us powerful allies in our struggle with the Romans." Then, whilst divesting himself of his shining armour, and arraying himself in his ceremonial robes, Eleazar told her in a few words how his destined bride had been attacked by bandits and was now with her father in Bethania. "We must fetch her over here this very evening," he concluded, "and her rich marriage-portion too. She is in danger

both from the robbers of the desert and the Romans. Giezi is to go over directly after the supper with a band of horsemen, and you are to accompany him."

"I am to go—what for?"

"You must persuade her to take refuge under my roof, and bring her here."

"I cannot do that! The Sabbath begins directly and such an expedition is contrary to the sacred law which the Lord gave us on Sinai. I will obey you in everything that is lawful, Eleazar. I will receive your second wife, and treat her as a sister, nay, I will even behave to her as if she were my mistress and I her handmaid; but you cannot compel me to violate the divine law."

"If you refuse to go you shall have the bill of divorce tomorrow."

"In that case—may the Lord of Heaven give me strength to bear it—I choose the bill of divorce."

"So be it. But you shall think over the matter in a place which you do not find exactly agreeable, in my grandfather's company."

"You will put me with Caiaphas, with the madman!" cried Rachel in an agony of terror, falling on the ground before her cruel husband and raising her hands in an attitude of entreaty: "Have mercy on me! Do not thrust me into that maniac's prison unless you wish the evil spirit which torments him should gain possession of me too!"

"You will either go to Bethania or keep my grandfather company tonight," retorted Eleazar, who knew how terrified Rachel was in the presence of the old man. "Make up your mind which to do while you eat the Passover. When it is ended, you will go to Bethania or you know where."

By this time night had closed in, and when the first faint star appeared in the blue vault of heaven, the trumpets announced that the hour for eating the Paschal Lamb had come. Amongst the thousands and thousands of families in Jerusalem, whether inhabitants of the city or pilgrims from elsewhere, assembled that night beneath the lighted lamps suspended from the ceiling to keep the Feast, there was probably not one in which devotion and rejoicing prevailed to so slight an extent as

in the little group gathered together in Caiaphas' house. Externally Ananus was, it was true, most scrupulous in observing every detail of the ceremonial prescribed by the law. With his loins girt, sandals on his feet and a staff in his hand, he took his place at the head of the table, on which stood a goblet of red wine. He then explained that this wine represented the blood of the children of Israel, which cried to the Lord for vengeance upon Pharaoh. "When will the day come when the Lord will at length listen to the voice of the people, crying aloud under the oppression of the Romans?" he remarked as an interlude.

After the prayer of thanksgiving for the recurrence of the Feast of unleavened bread he raised the goblet to his lips, and then handed it to his son, who passed it on in his turn. Then came the washing of hands with the prayer of thanking God for having hallowed His people by means of the ceremonial law. Rachel looked timidly at her husband, to see if this prayer touched his conscience. But Eleazar held his hands to have the water poured over them with an unmoved countenance. Now the table with the sacred viands was brought in from an adjoining room. In the centre, on a silver dish, was the undivided lamb, stretched on spits placed crosswise, a touching emblem of the true Paschal Lamb, offered upon the cross. But of that lamb none present knew. Beside the Paschal Lamb lay the *mazzoth*, the thin flat cakes of unleavened bread, dishes with bitter herbs, a vessel containing vinegar, and finally the *cheroset*, a sweet dish in the shape of tiles, which Nathanael and Ruth considered very palatable.

Some prayers came next; the bitter herbs were eaten, and Psalms 113 and 114 were recited, wherein the Psalmist extols the wonderful work of God in the exit from Egypt, and the great superiority of the true God above the gods of the heathen, ending with the cry of a just man in deep tribulation. The second goblet was then blessed and drunk. Whilst speaking a few words in memory of the bread of affliction eaten by their forefathers in Egypt, Ananus distributed the thin cakes of unleavened bread to the bystanders; afterwards he

raised his hand, and with the mystic motion which so nearly resembles the sign of the cross, he blessed the Paschal Lamb and divided it into pieces. The law required that it should be eaten standing, in silence and in haste; the greatest care being taken that not one of its bones should be broken. Again the hands were washed; a third goblet of wine was blessed and drunk, while the lesser Hallel (Alleluia) Psalms 115—118, were recited; the goblet of wine went round once more and the ceremonies of eating the Passover were ended. Even in this house a better spirit seemed to have descended, as the children repeated after every verse of the 117th Psalm, the canticle of divine compassion, the consoling refrain: For His mercy endureth for ever.

Rachel ventured to hope that her husband might relent. But the look he gave her when at the close of the repast the children and servants had withdrawn, told her that he was inexorable.

"Well?" he asked.

"I cannot, I dare not break the law."

"Then come with me." Thereupon he lighted a torch at the lamp by the light of which the Passover had been eaten, seized his wife's arm with a firm grip, and conducted her through dark passages and down a long flight of steps to the prison where Christ was mocked after the first judgment by Caiaphas, and where, bound hand and foot, He was confined during the night preceding his crucifixion.

As Rachel was being hurried along, a piercing shriek fell on her ear. Her resistance broke down. "Do not open the cell!" she cried in terror. "I cannot bear the sight of the unhappy wretch! May God forgive me the wrong which you compel me to do."

"There, I knew how it would be. Away with you to Bethania and fetch my bride," Eleazar coldly responded.

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## CHAPTER 11.

### Tidings of Benjamin.

As Salome was slowly walking back to the house through the garden after the departure of her husband and the two girls, she descried a female figure, apparently a stranger, approaching along the path leading from Bethania to the farm. A short distance further off a horseman, clad in the loose, flowing cloak of the desert tribes seemed to be following the woman. At the sight of the Bedouin it occurred to Salome that he might be one of the robbers who had attacked the Rabbi, and she hesitated whether to send the gardener after her husband to call him back; for she was afraid lest the lawless banditti might be coming to fetch the treasures they had failed to secure. But Salome was not of a timid disposition, and she told herself that Silas and his four assistants could defend the house against a small party of assailants, and if they came in a considerable force, her husband would be of little assistance in repelling them. In fact it would be all the better that Eusebius and his two nieces should be safe away. For herself she was not afraid, as far as she knew there was nothing of great value in the house, her husband not having told her about the Rabbi's two bags. The camels belonging to her guest were, it was true in the stables, and the bales were there containing very valuable carpets and silken fabrics, and she would be extremely sorry that the owner of these goods should be deprived of them. She thought for a moment, then calling to a labourer who was at work close by, she said to him:

“Eliud, I know you have your wits about you. Go and look round, especially up the valley, and see if there are any white birds, such as the one over there by the olive-tree, hovering about the neighbourhood. If there should be any number of them, go instantly to the



village, and ask the Roman Governor to send some soldiers to protect our house."

"Very good, mistress," Eliud replied. "But I think the Romans all went over to the city this morning. I shall be able to look up a dozen sturdy lads who would be a match for twice the number of Bedouins. Do not be afraid! Besides I hardly think that the brigands would venture so near the gates of Jerusalem during the feast-days."

So saying he thrust his spade into the ground and went off on his errand. Salome got back to the door just as the stranger came up to it, and approached her with uplifted hands, evidently in a state of great excitement. "O good lady, may the God of our fathers bless your hospitable house!" she exclaimed. "I was told that you received my master under your roof last night, when he had been attacked by robbers. If so, say, is he still alive, and is Thamar, his beautiful daughter here too? I am Sara, her former nurse."

"You are welcome my good woman," Salome answered, quite reassured by the honest countenance of the old servant. Opening the door, she continued: "May the blessing of the Lord attend your entrance here! Yes, the Rabbi is alive and we hope in a fair way of recovery from his wound. His daughter, who is really a charming girl, will be delighted to hear of your safety. And perhaps you know what has become of her little brother, about whom she is so anxious?"

"I have brought news of him, good news. But I must see the maiden alone, to tell them to her," Sara replied.

"And the horseman there, resting in the shade of the old olive, is he—"

"Yes he is one of the brigands, but a good-hearted fellow. For God's sake do not have him taken prisoner. Benjamin's, my young master's life depends on the man returning safe to the camp and bringing good news."

"Let your mind at rest, good woman, no harm shall befall him. I will send him out some refreshment by one of the servants. But tell me, is he alone, or are some of his comrades near at hand?"

"He alone accompanied me here. A company of horsemen left the camp at the same time that we did, but I do not think they followed us. At any rate they started in a different direction, and on the way hither I saw and heard nothing of them."

Her alarm in a great measure dispelled, Salome asked the nurse to wait a few minutes while she gave orders to take out some food and drink to the Bedouin, but on no condition to let him enter the premises, and to keep the doors fastened. Then she went into the sick man's chamber and beckoned to his daughter. Thamar saw at a glance that something unexpected had happened, but she preserved her self-control and left the room in silence. But when she caught sight of Sara, she could scarcely repress an exclamation of joy; but she laid her fingers on her lips, thus indicating to the servant that her Father must not be acquainted with her coming so suddenly. Salome showed them both into the sitting-room, and then hastened back to the sick man, to see if he wanted anything.

At last Sara could once more embrace her dear young mistress, and amid many tears of joy and loving caresses she expressed her grief at seeing her again under such untoward circumstances. It was some time before Thamar could make her old nurse calm enough to tell her tale in a comprehensible manner. First the old woman confounded herself in excuses for having deserted her charge in the moment of peril, begging pardon for her cowardice. The suddenness of the attack made her lose her head, she would repent having run away to her dying day.

Thamar comforted her and said with a smile that she had read of some men having taken to flight when suddenly taken unawares; then she had to listen to praises of her own courage, and submit to fresh caresses, before she could get Sara to answer to her inquiries concerning Benjamin. After a rambling account of all the discomfort she had had to suffer amongst the brigands she finally related how Benjamin had been so foolhardy as to play the eavesdropper at the deliberations of the leaders of the band. "Imprudent child!"

she wailed. "How easily he might have slipped down the precipice, in the dark, or one of the men, who would just as soon murder a fellow-creature as crush an insect, might have run him through the heart for his effrontery. I believe they would have done so, if they did not hope to get a large ransom for the poor boy, who now lies bound and closely guarded in the robber's cave. Poor dear little lamb!"

"What sum do they want for his ransom?" Thamar asked, glad to get to the gist of the matter at last. "I am sure my father would be willing to give any amount they may demand."

"That is what I said, what I have always said. I told Benjamin he need not fear; his father would give his weight in gold for him."

"I am not sure whether my father has as much gold as that. What is it that the brigands demand?" Thamar answered, beginning to lose patience with the loquacious old woman.

"The Sheik who sent me here did not name any sum at present. He wants to know how much my master will offer. And about your affianced husband, O child, child, I have things to tell of him that will make your hair stand on end!—"

"My dear Sara, one thing at a time! Let us speak first about my brother's ransom, then you shall tell me all that you seem to have on your mind against my betrothed. Then the Sheik wants to know what my father will offer?"

"Yes, and what your betrothed offers as well, the rascal!" Sara exclaimed with unwonted animus.

"Will Eleazar pay my brother's ransom as well, then? How does he know that Benjamin has been taken prisoner?" Thamar asked in astonishment.

"That is the point of it all—rogue that he is! The scamp, playing the same game as these cut-throats, their confederate, to whom my sweet turtle-dove is to be sacrificed!" And Sara launched forth with a string of invectives, until Thamar begged her to restrain her indignation and give some proof that Eleazar was really in league with the brigands.

The old woman then told her that Benjamin had heard the chiefs of the band expressly state that Ben Gioras had acted in accordance with the orders of the Captain of the Templeguard, Eleazar, and his father, and that they had promised him a share of the dowry, she did not remember how much, as his reward for assassinating the Rabbi.

"That is incredible! You and Benjamin must have lost your senses," exclaimed Thamar, now seriously alarmed. "Even supposing that Eleazar only wanted to marry me for the sake of my portion, what profit would my poor father's death be to him? He would have obtained possession of the dowry without committing a murder, and what is more, without having to share it with Ben Gioras."

"Yes, but that does not content the greedy wolf; he wants to fasten his claws on the whole of your brother's property: Do you not see, my poor dove, that if you were to marry this knave, and your father were to die, he would become your brother's guardian, and thus the whole of this property would come into his power. And then very much his life would be worth."

"Is it possible that the soul of a child of Abraham should be guilty of such wickedness!" Thamar cried, aghast at what she heard. "No, it is not possible, I will not believe it, no doubt Benjamin was mistaken. If all that were true, they would have told Ben Gioras to put the boy to death as well as his father, then I should have been sole heiress, and Eleazar by espousing me, would have had all at his disposal."

"Yes, yes, that is just what they planned; I was just going to tell you, child, that was the original design, so Benjamin heard and repeated the whole to me, as sure as I stand here! But Ben Gioras outwitted your worthy suitor. He wanted to spare the child's life and carry him off to the camp, in order to get more blood-money for him. Do you understand now? And the Sheik who has taken the command now Ben Gioras is gone, is just as crafty, in fact even more so. He means to get your delightful bridegroom and your father each to make an offer, and play them one against the other.

And for that reason he has sent a messenger to each at the same time. Now you see, my sweet dove, what tidings I have come to communicate. What answer are we to send to the Sheik by the horseman who is waiting outside the grounds? And I have another message to deliver from Benjamin, with a thousand kisses to you and your father: The poor boy enjoined on me above all to prevent you from marrying such a wretch. He said he would willingly give his life for the sake of saving you from such a fate."

"Dear little fellow!" said Thamar, deeply touched. "That is like his generous heart. However he need have no fear about that. I would rather die than belong to a man on whom the mere suspicion of such an egregious crime could rest. Besides, the surest means of rescuing my brother will be for me to refuse under any circumstances to become his wife, for in that case Benjamin's death would give him no right over my father's or my own property. Thus our best plan would be to let the man know as soon as possible by some safe and sure means, that he must renounce all hope of obtaining my hand. I must talk to our kind host about it. Alas that my father should be so ill and unable to speak, I need his wise counsel so much! Wait a few minutes Sara, I must go and see how Father is, and, oh, why did I not think of it before—you must be half-starved, poor soul. I will run and ask the mistress of the house to be so kind as to send you some refreshment."

Sara protested that she was too much distressed to swallow a morsel, though she wound up by saying that a few figs, or a handful of dates, not to speak of a piece of bread and a pitcher of wine would not be unacceptable.

Thamar on leaving her hastened to the sick-room. She found her father quite conscious, as she saw directly from the clear look in his eyes, and the kind nod with which he greeted her. His head too seemed cooler, and Salome assured her that he was better. She stooped down and kissed his hand: "You will be glad to hear, father, that we have news of Benjamin. But do not excite yourself about it, we shall get him back safe and sound on payment of a ransom; how much may I offer?"

The Rabbi's countenance beamed with joy. He made a sign to Thamar to give him the tablets, and wrote on them: Give them what they demand; but be cautious, for the less you throw into their clutches the more will be left for you and your brother.

That the sick man was much agitated by the intelligence he had received was evident even to an unacquainted eye. Thamar did not venture to tell him anything more; so she begged him to excuse her for a moment, while she sent away the messenger who had brought the information about Benjamin, and at the same time she beckoned to Salome to follow her out of the room. After she had asked for some refreshment for the old nurse, she inquired if she could speak to Eusebius. She was very sorry to hear that he was out, and would not be back before night, or perhaps the next morning.

What was she to do? Whose advice could she ask? Salome seemed a good old lady, kind-hearted, and anxious to do her best for everyone, but how was one to know whether she was prudent and able to keep things to herself? Thamar knew her too little to form any opinion as to her sagacity. But when she looked her full in the eyes, she felt she could trust her as a mother, and determined to tell her the whole story. That took some time to tell, and Salome was at a loss to know what advice to give. She would willingly have sent Silas to Jerusalem to call her husband back, but under the most favourable circumstances he could not return before two hours had elapsed, and they must act at once.

At last they came to the conclusion to send back word to the Sheik that the Rabbi would give a thousand shekels<sup>1)</sup> more for Benjamin's release, than the Captain of the Templeguard might offer. "A thousand shekels!" Salome had exclaimed, "that is a great deal of money. Will your father not be displeased at your offering so much? Whatever you do be sure to say not shekels of the sanctuary, for you know, shekels of the sanctuary are worth exactly twice what the ordinary ones are."

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<sup>1)</sup> About \$200.

"Let it be shekels of the sanctuary, dear lady," Thamar replied. "I will take the blame on myself, so long as I can rescue my dear little brother. Well, at any rate our offer will have the effect of making certain that his life will be spared for a few days. Sara shall send the Bedouin back to camp at once with our reply."

This she did and after a brief interruption, during which Thamar went to see if her father wanted anything, and Salome betook herself to her niece's room, in order, kneeling before the picture of our Lady, to commend herself and her guests at this critical juncture to the intercession of the Mother of God, the consultation was resumed. What steps could be taken to avoid falling into the power of Eleazar and the brigands? Salome was by no means disinclined to believe Benjamin's account of what he had overheard, as it tallied with what she already knew of the Captain and his father. He was an imperious, passionate man, and Salome could not do otherwise than wonder that the Rabbi should have promised his daughter in marriage to such a man, as he did not stand in the highest reputation.

"My father must have been deceived by his uncle Ezechias, who evidently acted in the interests of the family," Thamar explained. "But I am affianced to him now, and if his father does not break off the engagement, I do not know whether he has not a legal right to compel me to marry him. However, I am resolved I would sooner die than submit to that."

"Hush, child, you must not speak like that," Salome exclaimed. "Under no circumstances have we the disposal of our own life or death, and we must bear our life patiently, as long as God who gave it to us, is pleased to require this of us. He is just, and does not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength, and to those who love Him, all things work for good. Of course you cannot marry that man, if only for this reason that he already has a wife. I would sooner have you run away. And really I think that would be the best course for you to pursue. Write and break off with that man, Eleazar. You might go with your old nurse to a relative of mine, who lives a day's journey from

here, among the hills. She would receive you most kindly even though you did not tell the reason why you wished to remain in hiding. I will send Silas with you, and he can take a message from me. As soon as I know you are in safety, I will send your letter to the Captain of the Temple-guard. In a week or two your father will be well again, he can break off the engagement, and go back to Antioch with your brother, when the brigands give him up. Then you can join them there, and all live happily together again. Now is not that a good plan, my love? Heaven has put it into my mind, through the intercession — well, well, Heaven has suggested it and we will see at once about carrying it into execution.”

But no arguments could induce Thamar to leave her father under the present state of affairs. How could her absence be accounted for without causing him the greatest anxiety and agitation. She might just as well have enlightened him as to the character of his future son-in-law. Then there was another reason, one which in itself quite decided her to remain. She had been brought up to obey strictly the Mosaic law in regard to the rest of the Sabbath. “How could I set out on this journey just as the great Sabbath of the year is beginning?” she said.

Salome had not thought of that. “The Sabbath!” she exclaimed. “Oh that removes all difficulty. It will be quite time enough for you to start tomorrow evening, for until then Eleazar will not dare to move a finger against you.”

Thamar was not quite so sure of that; she suspected that a man who was capable of such deliberate crimes, would not shrink from a slight transgression of the law. She communicated her doubts to Salome, and then timidly suggested: “We must ask the protection of some other champion against these people. The Roman Governor perhaps.”

“What are you thinking of, child! He is said not to have his equal for injustice and rapacity.”

“Or the High-Priest?”

“Alas, within the last few years king Agrippa has appointed and deposed at least a dozen High-Priests. To their shame be it told, they purchased their post,



and then endeavoured to recoup themselves by the practice of usury. Since the sceptre departed from Judah, Aaron's staff has been in the hand of very few men of principle."

"Woe betide Israel, if that be so!" Thamar said with a sigh. Then after a brief pause she added colouring, and with some embarrassment in her manner: "If I could only let that noble Centurion, who rescued us from the hands of the brigands know the difficulty we are in, he would very probably give us advice and assistance."

Salome did not require to be very quicksighted to see into the young girl's heart. The Roman Captain had made a good impression on her too, she thought he seemed high-minded and well-principled. But he was a heathen. Would it be right on her part to bring this daughter of Israel into closer contact with this young Roman, to allow her to become better acquainted with him, perhaps to her spiritual harm? The Lord God had strictly prohibited the union of a daughter of His chosen people with the Canaanites on account of the danger of her falling into idolatry. And since the time of Esdras the more zealous Jews considered the law prohibiting them to join in marriage with the other heathen nations as binding upon them.<sup>1</sup>) She hesitated before answering; Thamar guessing her thought, said: "I did not mean to write to him myself. That would hardly be the correct thing to do. But if you would be so obliging as to write a few lines—?"

Salome still deliberated for a few moments as to what course she should pursue. Then she determined to send Eliud, who had just returned with the news that neither in the valley nor elsewhere had he encountered any suspicious-looking strangers, to Jerusalem with a note to her husband, to the effect that they were afraid of being attacked by a powerful enemy, and if he thought right, would he go to the Governor's palace, and look up the Centurion Lucius, who had brought the Rabbi to them the night before, and send him to protect them.

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<sup>1</sup>) Esdras, 9., 2, 10, 12., Also Fl. Josephus, Antiquities 19, 9, 1; 20, 7, 12.

This note was written in Aramæic. Salome at the same time gave the messenger one in Greek, addressed to the Centurion. Thamar had written it, but in her hostess' name. The orders Salome gave to her servant were as follows: "If you should meet Eusebius on the way, or find him at Seraphia's or Nicanor's house, give both the letters to him. If you do not find him, go to the Governor's palace and ask for the young Roman officer who was here last night. His name is Lucius, shall you remember that?"

"Yes, yes, a handsome young fellow, I shall know him again," Eliud replied.

"Very well, give him the letter with the red band and the Greek letters, but give it into no other hands but his—do you understand? Now make haste, so as to reach the city before the Sabbath begins."

"Then may I spend the Sabbath in Jerusalem?" the young man asked with a delighted look.

"Yes, to be sure, only be quick," Salome urged. Then turning to Thamar she said: "Now we have done our part, and the rest we must leave to God."

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## CHAPTER 12.

### A Night of Trouble in Bethania.

When the messenger had left Bethania, it was high time to prepare for the Paschal feast. It appears that the converts from Judaism observed the Mosaic law in this respect, as long as the temple remained standing. Accordingly Salome hastened to prepare all that was required, the wine, the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread, which had been baked in the morning, the condiments and the lamb, which was slaughtered and roasted in strict conformity to the instructions given in the law. In the absence of the master of the house, who was expected to return before evening closed in, Silas recited the prayers. He then pointed out, as he had heard Eusebius do, that the true Paschal lamb, of whose death upon the cross the lamb extended on cross-spits was emblematic, had already been slain for the sins of the world; and that the paschal ceremonies served rather to commemorate the deliverance of mankind out of the servitude of sin, than Israel's release from Egyptian bondage.

Thamar listened in astonishment; for the first time the mystic meaning of the Paschal lamb presented itself to her mind, and she asked herself if it could be that the Messiah was really figured by the lamb dressed on cross-spits, and if it were possible that He had suffered death upon the cross in order to purchase spiritual freedom for mankind. In the morning she had indignantly repudiated the idea of a Messiah made to suffer, loaded with ignominy; now involuntarily she asked herself whether the man who bore death with such heroic courage might not after all be the Messiah foretold by the prophets.

This idea left her no rest, when later on, she was watching beside her father. She had insisted upon sitting up with him that night, and Salome had retired to her

chamber, after seeing that all the doors were well bolted. The Rabbi could not get any rest. His wound seemed more painful; besides this he felt certain from Thamar's manner, though she tried to conceal her agitation, that something had happened. He made several attempts to speak, but the swollen state of his tongue prevented him from articulating distinctly, and his daughter begged him to desist from these efforts, as they would only make his throat worse. Then he asked her for the tablets and wrote: "You are uneasy about something. Tell me what is the matter."

In vain Thamar did her utmost to set her father's mind at rest, by assuring him that she hoped Benjamin would soon be restored to them. She told him that the brigands had not mentioned any sum as the amount of the ransom, only asked what he would offer, and that retarded the negotiations. Then it occurred to her that her father would inquire how much she had offered, and she would have to enter upon a long explanation of the whole affair. In order to prevent him from asking she changed the conversation, saying abruptly: "Father, our hosts who received us so kindly, regard Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah."

No sooner were the words out of Thamar's lips than she regretted the unfortunate speech; for her father started up with kindling eyes and with a violent effort he ejaculated the word: The carpenter's son! Then the blood began to trickle afresh out of his mouth. He paid no heed to this, but began to scribble on the tablets with feverish haste.

"Father, Father, you will kill yourself!" Thamar expostulated, now fairly frightened. "Pray, pray do not excite yourself in this way about nothing at all! I promise you they shall not persuade me to adopt their opinions until you have thoroughly examined them. I know full well that the Messiah will be a majestic ruler, that kings and peoples from the ends of the earth will come to pay Him homage, that through Him Israel shall rule all nations, that He is the Prince of Peace, the great Law-giver, that He is called the Father of future ages, that He shall wield the sceptre of His

Father David for evermore — and now it is already more than a quarter of a century since the death, the ignominious death of the Nazarite. Do not be afraid Father, Thamar is not to be lured away so easily from the faith and the hope of her forefathers!”

A gratified smile passed over the Rabbi's countenance. He kissed his daughter's forehead and then lay back on his pillows. But it was long before he recovered his composure. He inquired in writing why his entertainer had not let Ananus and Eleazar know that he was there. He only half trusted this friendly Nazarite, and regretted having confided the two bags containing so large a portion of his fortune to his care. He would leave the house as soon as he could be moved, and he told his daughter she must make her escape, and in her own person seek help in Jerusalem. — Thamar promised she would do this as soon as the law enjoining the Sabbath rest should permit, meanwhile she assured him that, apart from their false belief, the people they were with were anything but objectionable. Gradually the Rabbi calmed down, and shortly before midnight he fell asleep. Weariness closed his daughter's eyes also, and valiantly as she struggled against it, her head dropped on to her father's bed and she was soon in a sound sleep.

She was suddenly roused by a loud knocking and shouting, and before she was fully awake, Salome appeared in the doorway with a lamp, beckoning to her in apparently the greatest alarm. Of course the noise awoke the Rabbi. Thamar promised to come back and tell him as soon as she found out what the disturbance was, begging him not to agitate himself unnecessarily; she then ran out into the hall.

“A whole troop of men, the Temple-guards it appears, have surrounded the house and demand admittance,” Salome said, her countenance blanched with terror. “Only listen how they are shouting; they will break the doors in! For God's sake, what is to become of you, my child? How I wish my husband were here!”

Sara here joined the group, declaring they would all be murdered. Was there no back-door, she said, no way of escape?

"Who is the leader of the troop, and what does he demand?" Thamar inquired, pale but self-possessed. "Open one of the windows and let me speak to the men."

"What are you thinking of, my love?" cried the old nurse. "No doubt it is your delightful bridegroom, come to carry you off. You are lost, if once you let him see you. You must fly, and if there is no way of flight, we must hide you. Quick, dear lady, you surely know some place where my poor dear lamb can be kept from the jaws of the wolf."

Thamar could not deny the wisdom of Sara's advice. Why should she give herself in the power of this wretched Eleazar if it could be prevented? And when Salome said: "Sara is quite right," she allowed herself to be concealed in a cupboard in the kitchen, before the door of which, as it was not fully closed, the two women hastily piled up a number of faggots.

Then Salome went to the front door and told Silas to open it, while she herself, with Sara, took refuge in the sitting-room.

Silas parleyed awhile with the men outside through the little grating, and when he heard that they demanded instant admittance in the name of the Captain of the Temple-guard, he slowly unbarred the door, complaining loudly of this unwarrantable violation of the rest of the Sabbath. About a dozen men carrying lanterns and torches crowded into the hall; amongst them, to the infinite amazement of the honest gardener, was a closely-veiled woman.

The leader of the band spoke first. "So here we are in this nest of Nazarites, who are unjustly detaining my master's promised bride and her dowry. As the service of the temple obliges my master to remain in the town, he has sent his wife to fetch his bride. I and my comrades will take charge of her marriage portion, and I advise you to produce it forthwith, or I shall take the whole lot of you before the Chief Council, and you will all be stoned, as sure as my name is Giezi."

The Rabbi in a room close by heard every word that was said. What could the man mean? Had these Nazarites really sought to detain his daughter and her

portion by force? As far as the dowry was concerned he easily believed it of them, now that he knew what their creed was, and had they not attempted to pervert his daughter to their accursed doctrines? She had not said that in so many words, but the manner in which she talked to him about it made him suspicious. In his heart he thanked Eleazar for having sent a division of the Temple-guard to carry off him and his daughter by night from this robber's den. He made an effort to rise and go out to his son-in-law's envoy, but his strength was not equal to it and he fell back on his bed with a sigh.

The Rabbi heard a woman's voice next, but she spoke so gently that he could not catch what she said. But he heard Giezi's rejoinder: "There she is! And by my grandfather's beard, not over young and beautiful. You have not much occasion to be jealous of her, Rachel. But who cares for a smooth skin, if the money-bags are heavy enough, and old age has its recommendations, death saves all trouble about bills of divorce. Ha, ha, it is a good job that the nuptial journey should be made by night! And on your wedding-day, good lady, let me advise you to keep your veil well over your lovely countenance." Again peals of laughter reached the sick man's ear.

What was the meaning of it all? Rabbi Sadoc never suspected that the leader of the company had mistaken Sara for his daughter. But Thamar, who from her hiding-place followed every word, understood everything and was intensely anxious to know what answer her nurse would make. After a few agitated cries Sara seemed to acquiesce in her fate. "The faithful old soul," said Thamar to herself, "she is actually going to sacrifice herself for me," and she hesitated as to whether she ought not to deliver her nurse from the unpleasant position in which she was. But what harm could happen to her? Eleazar would assuredly let the old woman go, when he found out the mistake his men had made, and his anger would fall on the blockhead in command of them. And she thought with a shudder of what her position would be, had she fallen into the hands of the Captain of the Temple-guard.

Presently she heard the leader of the band giving orders to load the camels with the bales of goods which had been found, and which Silas asserted to be the property of the wounded Rabbi. "Have you nothing else in your keeping? No gold, no trinkets? I will wring your neck if I find you are concealing a single shekel from me," the same rough voice that had spoken so loudly before was heard to say.

"There is nothing more that I know of," Salome's voice replied. "What a liar the woman is!" the Rabbi thought, "she means to cheat us of the two bags I gave into her husband's safekeeping. Why does not the messenger Eleazar has sent to rescue us out of this den of thieves come to me, and ask me about the treasure I brought here with me?"

Inquiry was in fact at that very moment being made about the Rabbi. The answer given was that he was seriously ill and must not be disturbed, much less could he be conveyed to Jerusalem that night. The leader's voice was then heard to say: "I have no orders about that. My master told me to bring the bride and her dowry, and since we have got both of them, we may as well go, so as to be back by daybreak. Fetch a pitcher or two of wine for my men! In the meantime I will make a close inspection of the premises. Bring torches."

"I understand, you arch-roguer, you hope to find a few gold eggs for your own nest," was the reflection Thamar made to herself.

"Now he will come to me at last, and I shall be able to tell him about the two bags that I entrusted to the Nazarite" the Rabbi thought, as he tried to sit up. "The fellow my future son-in-law sent must be a born fool, if he thinks he is to leave me lying here among these blasphemers."

At that juncture Sadoc heard a voice exclaim: "Look out Giezi, there are some horsemen coming!"

Indecision and confusion seemed to prevail for some moments. "They are brigands!"—Bring the bales indoors!—"Bolt the gates"—O you cowards, can you not defend yourselves!—The Rabbi heard the intruders running hither and thither, while the 'stamp of horses'



hoofs, the shouts of Arabs, the clang of weapons became audible without.

"Surrender, you are outnumbered, or by Hagar our mother, you are dead men!" a threatening voice was heard to cry.

"They actually have surrendered! they are unbolting the doors!" the Rabbi groaned aloud.

In fact at the sight of the brigands Giezi's cowardly followers laid down their arms without striking a blow, in spite of all their leader could do. "It is no joke to have dealings with these sons of Belial," one of these mercenaries remarked as he opened the door of the house.

Sheik Mardoch and several of his men entered with a scornful laugh, saying: "We are infinitely obliged to you, good sirs, for saving us the trouble of loading the camels. Now hand over the two bags of money to us, and then you can proceed in peace to Jerusalem and inform the valiant Eleazar that in these disturbed times Sheik Mardoch thought well to take the marriage portion into his safe-keeping, till Ben Gioras at least should be set at liberty! And with regard to the bride—what, is that the woman?—Can that be she? By the roses of Jericho, I do not grudge her to him. But I fancy I saw that face somewhere lately." The Sheik recognized Sara for the servant, but comprehending the trick that was to be played on the Captain of the Temple-guard, a sly smile hovered about his lips, and he concluded: "That is as it should be; take the bride to my worthy friend, hand over the money-bags to me and depart in peace."

Neither Giezi nor Salome knew anything at all about the money-bags. In vain did the Sheik threaten them with torture and death if they would not give them up. Giezi and his men were searched, but nothing was found on them, and the Arab Chief perceived that Salome was speaking the truth. He concluded that the Rabbi must have kept his treasure in his own possession, and insisted on being conducted to him. Now Sadoc congratulated himself on having given the bags into his host's safe-keeping, as he stood a much better chance of recovering them of him, by aid of the authorities, than

of ever seeing them again, if they got into the hands of the brigands. Accordingly he wrote upon the tablets that the two bags were in Eusebius' charge.

"Is that your husband?" the Sheik said, addressing Salome. And on her answering in the affirmative, he continued: "Very well. In that case I hope I shall get those two bags. You shall come back with me to the camp as a hostage; and you young man—" turning to Silas—"can tell your master that if he does not send the two bags, just as he received them from the Rabbi, up to our camp under the lone ilex before the moon, now full, reaches her last quarter, his wife shall be put to a cruel death. Now we will be off!"

The Sheik and his followers had appeared on the scene like the whirlwind which sweeps over the sands of the desert, and as if borne on the wings of the wind they departed, carrying their booty with them. They were gone before Giezi and his men could recover from their bewilderment, and before the sick man on his couch and Thamar in her hiding-place could realize what had happened.

"That is a nice end to the matter," the leader of the mercenaries presently remarked. "The dowry is gone to the four winds of heaven, and whether my master will care one brass farthing for the bride without it, is quite a question. Well, we must take with us what the robbers have left, and you Rachel, must tell your husband that we made a valiant defence. There were ten of those sons of Belial to one of us. I should like to have looked round on my own account, but we must get home before daybreak."

Giezi gave orders for the start; the Rabbi entreated by signs that he might be taken with the party. But all in vain. Giezi assured him that the night air might do him harm, besides they had only one litter, in which there was barely room for the two women. "Stop here patiently until after the Sabbath; then Eleazar will send for you, if he thinks it worth his while." With this poor consolation Giezi left the Rabbi and took his departure.

Thamar listened till the sound of their retreating steps had died away, and was in the act of quitting her

hiding-place, in order to go to her father, when the clash of arms was again heard in the vicinity of the farm. At the spot where the way to the valley of Wadi Hod branches out of the road to Bethania, the robbers encountered and were instantly attacked by a troop of Roman cavalry. The Sheik endeavoured in vain to reach the entrance to the ravine, so he turned back, in the hope of escaping by means of a circuit round the village. But this manoeuvre brought him face to face with the company of the Temple-guard. When Giezi perceived that the Romans had attacked the Arabs, he saw his advantage and determined to take revenge on the Sheik. So with lowered lances he bade his men charge the brigands, who finding themselves assailed both in front and in rear, fled to the right and to the left, heedless of the orders of their Chief. In fact the Sheik himself soon had to follow their example, to avoid falling into the hands of the Romans. Leaving the camels to take care of themselves, he galloped, with Salome before him on the saddle, and pursued at first by a few horsemen, over cross roads and unbeaten paths, owing his safety at last only to the strength and speed of his arab steed.

"Your's was timely aid," Giezi cried to the Roman Centurion. "Those thieves were within an ace of carrying off the portion of my master's bride, he is the Captain of the Temple-guard."

"Do you imagine we are going to be so generous as give up to you these camels with their valuable load? I like that!" said the Roman officer with a scornful laugh. "Go and tell your master, the valorous Captain of the Guard, with the Centurion Metilius' compliments, that if he wishes to purchase any of the costly fabrics he must apply to the Procurator of Judea, Gessius Florus. For I am sent by him to seize these goods, which one of my comrades took from the brigands yesterday, and convey them to the Pretorium. My comrade is not acquainted as yet with the customs of this province. And the Procurator is also desirous of taking under his protection a beautiful young Jewess, who was likewise rescued from the brigands. Is she in the litter perhaps? It was

most thoughtful of you to bring a litter from Jerusalem, and if you would have the goodness to lend me the bearers that are wanted for it, I should consider you the most obliging Jew I ever had the good luck to meet with."

What was Giezi to do? The thought occurred to him, that he could save himself from a scolding by no better means than by telling his master that the Romans had taken both the bride and her marriage portion away from him. Who would have the audacity to oppose the rulers of the land by force? Accordingly he acquiesced in the proposal, and his band accompanied the Roman soldiers back to Jerusalem.

The conflict had taken place in the immediate neighborhood of the house, for the Temple-guardsmen had been driven back by the Arabs and the Romans to the wall of the outbuildings, where they made a stand. Thus Sadoc and Thamar heard every shout of the combatants, every stroke of the ringing swords. Thamar could no longer bear to remain in her place of concealment, she must go to see how her father was. In fact she found him in a sorry case. In consequence of the violent excitement, his wound had burst open and began to bleed afresh, and as the blood did not ooze through the bandages, but flowed into the windpipe, the poor man was in danger of suffocation. With the greatest difficulty, by coughing and gasping he continued to throw up the blood, so as to draw his breath more easily. But the reaction after the excitement, and the loss of blood occasioned such weakness, that he had one fainting fit after another, and his daughter feared he would expire in her arms.

In her anguish Thamar called aloud for help, and then for the first time became aware that she was alone in the house with her sick father. Silas and the other men had slipped away while the combat was going on, and hidden themselves in a shrubbery on the side of Mount Olivet. Thamar wrung her hands and threw herself on the ground beside her father's bed sobbing: "He is dying, he will die! O God of our fathers, come to his assistance and to mine!" Then a sudden thought struck her, for an instant she hesitated, then as if im-

pelled by a supernatural, irresistible force, she added the words: "Jesus of Nazareth, if Thou art indeed the risen Messiah and hast power to help us poor children of Thy people, O turn an eye of pity on me and assist me in my distress!"

It did not appear as if her prayer would be granted. Her father lay motionless as a corpse: his breath seemed to have stopped. Thamar watched intently in the hope of perceiving some sign of life; none made itself seen or heard. "He is dead, he is dead!" she sobbed, and overcome by grief and exhaustion, she lost consciousness. And when the first pale rays of dawn crept into that silent chamber, Thamar was to be seen lying prostrate upon the ground beside her father's bed in a dead faint.

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## CHAPTER 13.

### Unpleasant Intelligence for Lucius and Eleazar.

It was already quite dark before Salome's messenger reached Jerusalem with the letters. Forgetful of the orders he had received to make haste, he sauntered through the narrow streets, which were still crowded with pilgrims going up to keep the Feast, to the Upper Market Place, and knocked at Seraphia's door. Rhode opened it, and in answer to his enquiry told him that Eusebius had only stayed there a few minutes, and that he would be found, most probably amongst the brethren in the Cenacle; his nieces had gone thither a short time ago. Eliud might have contented himself with this information, and gone at once in search of his master; had he done so, he would in all probability have found him before the service began, and delivered the letter, on the receipt of which Eusebius would doubtless have hastened back to Bethania. But Eliud being young and thoughtless, entered into conversation with Rhode. Rhode was a good girl enough, yet on hearing from Eusebius' servant what had happened on the preceding night, her curiosity—and what woman is totally exempt from this heritage of Eve's daughters—led her to stand a long time talking with him, wondering to herself why Martha had not said a word to her about the wounded Rabbi, his beautiful daughter, and the handsome Roman officer. At length however, she remembered that she was neglecting her duty; and sent away the man, bidding him be quick. "Your master ought to have had the letter long ago," she said. "How foolish of me to keep you chattering here! God forgive me my carelessness!"

Eliud next directed his steps to the building, called by King David's name close by. There he was told by the porter that divine worship had commenced, and the letter could not be delivered without interrupting the

service. Had he really had orders to deliver the letter just at the time of the Feast?

Salome had not said that expressly, so Eliud left the note written in Aramæic with the porter, charging him to give it to Eusebius as soon as the service was concluded. He then slowly crossed the market-place to the Palace, debating in his own mind, whether under the circumstances, the note was to be given to the Centurion.

Whilst he was passing Caiaphas' palace, revolving these thoughts in his mind, to his astonishment he saw an armed force issuing from the gateway. "Whatever are they going to do on the night of the Sabbath? And they have actually got a litter with them!" he said to himself. As the men passed by him at a quick pace, he thought he heard the word of command: "To the Gate of the Fountain." Though the Fountain-gate led by the side of the pool of Siloam to Bethania, and Eliud asked one of the men if they were going thither, the soldier answered yes, rather crossly; and when the inquisitive stranger went on to inquire what they wanted there in the night of the Sabbath, he told him it was no business of his, and pushed him away with the butt end of his lance.

"Oho," Eliud said, "what a polite gentleman! Surely one may ask a friendly question." And as he walked on, a little ruffled, he thought in himself whatever could these hired Temple-guards want in Bethania at that time of night. Finally he came to the conclusion that Eusebius might have begged the Chief Council to send them to protect his house from the attacks of the brigands, or, and this idea had a greater appearance of truth, the escort and the litter were sent to convey the Rabbi in safety to Jerusalem.

"The guard my mistress wanted to defend her from the brigands of whom she was so much afraid will not be wanted now," the messenger argued, and debated within himself, whether he might not just as well go and look up some friends and relatives in the quarter of the town called Bezetha. Quickly deciding to do this, for he was no friend to long discussions, he took a short cut to the Gate of Ephraim, which led through the

northern wall of the old city to the new part, telling himself that he would be able to get back to King David's house long before the conclusion of the service.

But when he reached the Gate of Ephraim, he found a tolerably numerous troop of Roman cavalry waiting there, and one of the watchmen announced in a low voice first in Latin and then in broken Aramæic, that a reward of ten sesterii, a sum equivalent to about thirty cents, was offered to any one who would serve as a guide to show this company the nearest road to Bethania. "Another band of armed men going to Bethania, what can be the reason of that?" Eliud asked himself in astonishment. He drew nearer to see if after all, the Centurion Lucius was Captain of the band. He could not see him, so he inquired the name of the officer in command, and was told that it was Metilius. Having heard that officer mentioned as a favorite of the Governor whom all hated, he was about to turn away, when the gate-keeper caught him by the arm saying, "You may just as well act as guide, my good friend, for you do not seem to be one of the zealous sort of Jews who are eating lamb and mazzoth in their houses, and declare with a sanctimonious face that the law forbids them to take a little walk to Bethania and return with ten sesterii in their pocket."

The servant excused himself by saying he had an urgent letter to deliver to the Centurion Lucius, and on that account could not possibly act as their guide. "Produce the letter!" cried the decurion of the guard. "Lucius the Centurion will shortly be round here to look after the sentries, and then I will give it to him. "It appears," he added, turning to one of his comrades, that the Procurator is not particularly fond of that fellow Lucius, or he would not have put him in charge of the guard the first evening he is here, instead of asking him to dinner, to meet the Legate."

Eliud's asseverations that he was bound to deliver the missive into Lucius' own hands would have availed nothing, had not a guide put in an appearance at the right moment, who was glad to earn the wage. Metilius rode off at once with his company through the gate of



the old city, in the direction of the Sheep's gate, towards the east. Eliud, who suspected this troop sent off by the Governor, for whom every one had an ill word, to be on no good errand, determined to wait for Lucius there, and deliver the letter to him in person.

Opposite to the gate was a tavern kept by an old Jew named Issachar for the benefit of the soldiers of the guard, and by day and by night Roman soldiers might be seen sitting there. The messenger also betook himself thither and called for a drink. The Romans tried to persuade him to join them in throwing dice, in the hope of getting a few *geras* out of his pocket, and the young fellow, who found the wine of Hebron rather heady, would probably have been induced to stake something on a throw, but happily for him, the clang of horses' hoofs was heard, and the decurion called out the men to present arms.

It was the Centurion Lucius who came riding up; Eliud knew him by his white horse and his comely countenance, on which the burning pitch threw a ruddy glow. He hastened up to the officer, handing him the letter with the words: "It is from Bethania, read it at once."

"From Bethania!" ejaculated Lucius, making a sign to the decurion to bring a torch, by the light of which he glanced at the few lines contained in the missive. "Salome—I did not think that was the name of the Rabbi's beautiful daughter."

"Nor is it, her name is Thamar," the man replied. "But those elegant Greek characters are her handwriting. Salome, my mistress cannot write Greek."

"And who is the powerful enemy by whom she is threatened?"

"Oh, Salome is terribly afraid of the brigands. She sent me out again and again to look if they were in sight, but I saw nothing of them. Now that a division of the Temple-guard and a company of your cavalry have gone over to Bethania, she will have protection enough and to spare."

The decurion here stated that Metilius had gone to Bethania with a troop of horsemen, for the purpose of fetching certain valuables and a fair maiden for the

Procurator. "You would have spared him the trouble of this excursion by night, if you had but brought the booty away yourself, and what is more, you would have found a way into Gessius Florus' good graces. But you seem to have learnt nothing of our customs in this province, while you were under Cestius Gallus."

"Are we Romans or robbers," Lucius exclaimed indignantly. "We shall see whether the Legate does not forbid such proceedings. Keep this messenger here in the guard-room until I return." So saying he turned his horse's head and galloped up the narrow street in the direction of the palace.

"Mind you do not burn your fingers my fine fellow," muttered the decurion, as he watched the officer with a somewhat discomfited expression. "That would be a pity; see how well he sits his horse."

When the Centurion reached the court-yard of the castle, he threw his bridle to the sentry and ran up the marble stairs two steps at a time. In the atrium, which was brilliantly lighted up, he said to one of the slaves who were carrying glasses and pitchers of wine into the banquetting hall: "Ask Claudius Lysias to come out to me at once, but let no one else hear." The loud laughter of men over their cups, the sweet sounds of flute and cymbals and merry songs were heard in the hall, and the figures of female dancers flitted by when the slave with his pitchers of wine pushed the curtain aside. Lucius, waiting impatiently, was debating whether he could not enter the triclinium while the dancing was going on, and accuse the Procurator to the Legate before all the company of carrying off a young damsel, when the Tribune appeared.

"Well, what is up now? Have you come to announce a general insurrection of the Jews? Have they got possession of the gates?" he asked.

"I have something to tell which is really enough to make the measure of disaffection overflow, and cause a popular rising," the Centurion replied. He then drew the Tribune aside and told him what he had just heard at the gate of Ephraim.

"That certainly is revolting injustice—"

"It is shameful, shameless, intolerable," interposed Lucius.

"We must add it to the other accusations which are to be laid before the Legate at an opportune time. At present nothing can be done."

"Something must be done," cried the Centurion. "I will not have this maiden, this noble, pure maiden, whose father has just met with such a misfortune, fall into the hands of that libertine, were they Jews ten times over. Cannot you procure me an interview with Cestius Gallus at once?"

"That is likely, while this merry symposium is in full swing, and he has paid court far too freely already to the good wine of Cyprus! What are you thinking of?"

"Well then relieve me of the duty of inspecting the sentries, and give me a few hours' leave of absence. If I can prevent it, that girl shall not be exposed to rough handling on the part of our soldiers, and on no consideration shall Florus get her into his power."

Lysias stared at his young friend. "You are very venturesome on behalf of that Jewess! But I am sure your intentions are irreproachable. I wish our procurators had somewhat of your sense of justice; the Roman empire would then stand on a firmer basis. Well, I will send someone else to look to the guard, and I grant you twelve hours' leave of absence. Of course you must be prepared to take the consequences of your interference in what the Governor will call his rights, and you will not find them very agreeable."

"I will take the consequences!" Lucius exclaimed as he hurried back to the Gate.

The Tribune Lysias looked after him with feelings of admiration saying to himself: "If I did not know that he worshipped our gods, I should really take that young fellow for a Christian. It is not often that young men of such good moral character come from Rome!"

Almost at the same time that the Centurion Lucius left the city by the Sheep's gate, Metilius with his troop of horse and Giezi with his men, returning from Bethania, entered through the Gate of the Fountain by the pool of Siloam. The two companies did not part company until

they reached the Upper Market, Giezi having made one more effort to obtain possession of at least a portion of the spoil for his master. "He may consider himself lucky that the Procurator gives his wife up to him without exacting a ransom," Metilius said in a sarcastic manner, while the unfortunate Rachel was getting out of the litter in fear and trembling; she knew, poor woman, the reception that awaited her. "Meanwhile we will take the bride on to Florus. What does your master want to burden himself with two wives for!"

Eleazar was impatiently looking for the return of his band, and for this reason he had already an hour before dismissed the leading men of the faction of the Zealots, who had held a meeting by night in his house. To his great annoyance it had been decided in the assembly to ransom Ben Gioras, the majority of those who were present wishing to entrust him, to the exclusion of Eleazar, with the leadership of the insurrection. It was hoped by this step to ensure the assistance of the chief of the brigands whose members were estimated at about ten thousand armed men, and also to gain the co-operation of Sheik Mardoeh, his ally, against the Romans. The conspirators had begged Eleazar to renounce, at least for a season, the leadership of the movement in favour of Ben Gioras, and he had been obliged, whether he would or no, to yield to the persuasions of his friends.

With the exception of this point, all his other proposals had been agreed to. The unanimous opinion was a blow must be struck, and that without delay. A pretext could soon be found in some one of the Governor's open acts of injustice, in fact he seemed to invite an insurrection. The greater number of the 18,000 men employed on the temple works, who were dismissed by Agrippa in the preceding year, when he declared the building to be completed, had been gained over, and only awaited the signal for action. The arsenals at Masada contained weapons and equipments for a whole army, and it would be easy to bribe or take by surprise the guard of the fortress. As for the leaders of the moderate party, who up to that time had frustrated every attempt to throw off the Roman yoke, they must

be put out of the way by the daggers of the *sicarii*, to whom full liberty would be given in that respect.

So much had been resolved upon, and Eleazar was glad of it. But the fact that in this contest for Israel's freedom he was to be subordinate to Simon Ben Gioras marred all his pleasure. For about an hour he paced up and down the courtyard in a very irate mood, and at the end of the time he had by no means calmed down. "Ben Gioras, the brigand-chief our leader! A brigand-chief the deliverer of Israel out of bondage! And I, the scion of a sacerdotal house, am to be subject to this desert thief, and the principal share of the credit is to be his, not mine! Yet the dowry I am to have and my father-in-law's money, my money rather, is to hire mercenaries and purchase allies! It is positively maddening. And now what has become of that fool Giezi with his band? Day is breaking in the east, and they have not returned yet! they ought to have been back here long ago."

At length the noise of arms and the tramp of soldiery fell on his ear, and he hastened to the gate, to open it in person. The party which entered did not look much like conquerors returning in triumph with their booty; the mercenaries came in with downcast looks and gloomy demeanour, followed, not preceded by their leader with the unhappy Rachel.

Eleazar could contain himself no longer. "What is the meaning of this? Where is the litter with my affianced bride? Where are the camels with the marriage-portion?" he broke out. Before answering, Giezi cautiously closed the courtyard gate. He then said: "There is no need to let all the town know that our expedition was a failure. It was through no fault of ours, we were not wanting either in discretion or valour, as your wife can testify. I had already laden the beasts with the bales of costly wares, and put the Rabbi's daughter into the litter with your wife, when a troop of armed men, fifty or a hundred at the least, came up suddenly and in the Governor's name, carried off both the bride and her dowry. That is all literally true, as sure as I stand here."

"Then the bride and her portion are now in the Pretorium, in the power of Florus?"

"Yes, by this time they will be there. They came with us as far as the Upper Market."

"Who was the officer in command of this gang of uncircumcised Philistines, did you learn his name?"

"It was the Governor's favorite, the Centurion Metilius."

"He actually said that he was acting by the Governor's orders? Think a moment—did he really say that?"

"He certainly said so, more than once. Your wife and my comrades here will corroborate what I say." And so the soldiers did.

Then Eleazar clenched his fists and raised them to heaven, exclaiming: "That is a little too much! Now he has filled his cup to the brim! The man whom the Emperor sent to preserve law and order in the land, dares to carry off the daughter of a high-born son of Israel, the affianced bride of the Captain of the Temple-guard. The Procurator guilty of the abduction of a maiden! The Chief Council, the whole of Jerusalem shall hear of it, it shall be proclaimed to all Israel, assembled to celebrate the Feast! We must indeed have water instead of blood in our veins, if these tidings do not rouse us to break our chains! Giezi, you must come with me at once to the temple, the Chief Council will assemble there at daybreak."

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## CHAPTER 14.

### In the Temple.

While Eleazar hastened to the temple with his servant, Rachel entered the house with a sorrowful mien.

In spite of all her troubles she had not forgotten that Nathanael, her husband's younger brother, had on the previous evening, before she heard anything of the nocturnal expedition to Bethania, begged her to call him very early on the morrow. The fact was, he had just completed his twelfth year, the age at which the Jews first allowed boys to be admitted into the Court of the Men, and he was to exercise his privilege for the first time at the Feast of the Passover. For weeks before Nathanael had talked and dreamt of nothing else, looking forward eagerly to the day when, on the early dawn, as soon as the gates of the temple were opened, he should enter the sacred precincts. Wherefore Rachel woke him before it was fully light, and helped him to dress himself in the sky-blue tunic and coloured ephod, after she had smoothed his curly hair, and anointed it with a few drops of fragrant oil.

"But who is to take you in, child of my heart?" she asked the boy. "Eleazar has already gone to the temple on urgent business."

"Dear, dear, whatever business can he have on the great Feast of the Passover, when all business is to be suspended? He promised to take me as far as the priests' vestry, and explain everything to me. And you and Ruth must not venture further than the door that separates the Court of Women from the Court of the Men!"

"For my part, I am not in a joyous mood, I cannot rejoice as it behooves a child of Israel to do on the commemoration-day of the exit from Egypt, and therefore I had better stay at home. But your cousin Joseph Ben Matthias, who taught you to write the Greek characters, will take you with him right willingly. Make

haste, run across to him, and ask him very politely. It is quite light now, he will be going soon."

The boy in his gay festival-attire bounded like a deer across the street to the house of Joseph the scribe. He arrived just at the right time, Joseph was in the act of going up to the temple. So he took the merry boy, of whom he was fond, by the hand, and said kindly: "There is an assembly of the Chief Council to be held before the morning sacrifice, but the High-Priests and princes of the people are often a little late. Come along, I shall be able to show you what is most worth seeing."

When they had reached the Tyropeon Valley, and were mounting the steps which conducted to the platform on which the temple stood, in the company of many other pilgrims, Joseph directed the boy's attention to the massive sub-structure which supported a considerable portion of the outer court, and the colonnades surrounding it. Enormous piles, formed of huge blocks of stone, supported the gigantic edifice.

"These foundations," Joseph explained, "cost more than the whole of the magnificent temple that rests upon them. They were laid in part by Solomon, and up to last year thousands of workmen have been employed in extending them and adding to their strength. Now the temple is at last finished, and it will remain standing until the end of time. For what power on earth is capable of overturning walls of such massive masonry?"

"In the interior of these are underground flights of steps and passages which conduct to the precincts of the sanctuary. Giezi told me Eleazar often goes that way when he has secret conferences with the High-Priests," Nathanael said with an air of importance.

"It is very imprudent of Giezi to tell you such things and the best thing you can do is to keep them to yourself," the Scribe replied.

By that time they had ascended the steps and passed through the gateway into the west colonnade. Opposite to them was the wall of the sanctuary of sanctuaries, constructed of marble of a dazzling whiteness, about 175 feet high, towering over them like a colossal snow mountain. The Scribe pointed out to the boy the huge



size of the blocks which Solomon had caused to be brought from the quarries. "The cornerstone over there," he said, "is 70 feet long and over 7 feet broad, and there are others of equal dimensions in the edifice. It is past comprehension how these blocks of marble could be transported from a distance."

"The spirits of the air are said to have helped Solomon," Nathanael remarked sagely. "He had a magical ring, when he turned it round on his finger, the heaviest stones flew through the air and deposited themselves wherever he wished. My nurse told me all about that."

"One might almost imagine that to be the real explanation," said Joseph with a smile, as he conducted the boy onward through the Court of the Gentiles, which was paved with beautiful mosaics, to the eastern side of the temple.

At that moment a trumpet-blast from the roof of the temple, echoing over the houses of the town, announced the dawn of the feast-day, and the first rays of the sun lit up the roof of the temple, causing the gold plates wherewith they were covered to glow with a rosy light. Twenty stalwart men were seen to push open the two halves of the gate of Corinthian bronze, the east gateway of the temple, known as the Corinthian or Beautiful Gate. "Look," Joseph whispered to the boy at his side, "those men have to exert all their strength to push those gates back on their hinges, the weight of them is so tremendous. The doors are 52 feet high and 26 feet wide. That bronze-work has hardly its equal in the whole world. It is far more costly and richer than the other eight gates which are of cedar-wood, overlaid with plates of gold and silver. They too are being opened now. Look how the thousands and thousands of pilgrims, many of whom have passed the night in the cloisters of the outer court, are now pouring like a living stream through these nine portals into the interior of the temple."

Joseph now approached the enclosure, or stone railing, at the entrance to which notices were suspended, in Greek and Latin, warning Gentiles not to proceed further under pain of death. The high wall of the terrace which

ran round the inner court of the temple formed the last boundary which enclosed the house of God. It was with a feeling of awe that the boy ascended the twelve steps leading to the Corinthian gate.

The temple formed an oblong of buildings some several stories in height, divided in the middle by a transverse structure into two large inner courts shut off in the west by the sanctuary itself. Joseph and Nathanael now entered the outer Court, the Court of Women. The Scribe pointed out to his companion the two enormous columns which supported the porch, 65 feet high and about 12 feet in girth, carved out of a single block of stone.

But the boy paid little attention to these statistics, which conveyed no meaning to his mind. He was longing to penetrate into the interior, and he crossed the Court of the Women with a hasty step. He scarcely vouchsafed to cast a glance at the galleries, which were rapidly filling with closely-veiled figures, but he gazed in astonishment at the two gigantic four-branched candle-sticks, as he pressed onwards to the splendid gate, glittering with gold, that led into the Court of Israel. He had however to restrain his impatience while Joseph, who was a Pharisee, ostentatiously dropped a coin into one or two of the poor-boxes. After he had shown the boy the spacious halls on either side, in one of which the first-born of every family was brought to be presented to the Lord, they ascended the flight of steps, of semi-circular form, which brought them to the threshold of the Court of Israel. Only a narrow strip of this courtyard, divided by a low stone balustrade from the Court of the Priests, was open to the laity. Standing before this balustrade they found themselves exactly in front of the great altar of burnt offering, and the vast basin, the "sea of brass" containing the water needed for the sacrifices. Behind that rose the temple proper, the sanctuary and the Holy of holies; Joseph prostrated himself on the ground, his forehead touching the marble pavement, and Nathanael followed his example. When his devotions, which were somewhat protracted, were ended, the Scribe drew the boy aside into the cloister which bounded the court to the right and to the left,

and in an undertone began to explain to him the wonders which he then beheld for the first time.

“Look at that magnificent gate, so lofty and so wide, it is entirely plated with gold. It leads into the vestibule of the sanctuary, and stands open day and night in order to indicate that the God of our Fathers is always ready to listen to the petitions of His people Israel. If you go through that gate and cross the vestibule you come to another gate, the folding-doors of which are likewise never closed. But a costly curtain of Babylonian manufacture prevents the interior of the sanctuary to be seen. Do you see that gigantic gold vine above the door, from which hang clusters of grapes of solid gold as long as the ordinary height of a man?”

“Yes, I see them, also the magnificent candelabra hanging from the ceiling. That is not the seven-branched candlestick?”

“No, that is in the sanctuary. That candelabra was presented by Queen Helena of Adiabene. The golden vine is symbolical of the Hebrew people. The four colours of the veil have a mystical meaning, they denote the four elements of which the visible world is composed. Scarlet and blue represent fire and air, the white byssus and the dark purple signify the earth and the sea. Altogether they form the visible veil of the unseen, invisible Creator.”

“How wonderful, how beautiful the God of our Fathers must be, if His garment is so fair!” said the boy who was listening most attentively. “Then the candlestick with seven branches is in the sanctuary?”

“Yes; its seven lamps denote the planets in the firmament of heaven. The candlestick is of the purest gold, so are the table of shewbread and the altar of incense. The twelve loaves of shewbread signify the twelve signs of the zodiac and the months of the year, and the altar of incense is replenished with every kind of fragrant spices which sea and land, whether inhabited or uninhabited, produce, as a token that God is the possessor of all things upon the earth, and all the fruits of the earth are dedicated to Him.<sup>1)</sup> The walls of the

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, *Antiq.* V. 5, 4, 5.

holy place are plated with gold plates up to the height of 100 feet from the floor, and a veil, still more costly than the one you see, screens the entrance to the Holy of holies."

"Is it true that this veil was once rent from the top to the bottom, during the time that my grandfather Caiaphas was High-Priest? Giezi told me so, but Eleazar declared it was a lie," the child inquired.

"You must not believe everything that ignorant servants tell you," the Pharisee replied, with a frown. Then he quickly continued: "In the Holy of holies there is the Ark of the Covenant, and on the wings of the Cherubim the glory of God used to rest. We still believe that the Lord God of Sabaoth is present there, although His majesty is no longer visible; since the destruction of Solomon's temple the Ark of the Covenant has been lost. Today the High-Priest, clad in his vestments, will go into the holy place at the time of the sacrifice to implore the assistance of the Lord on behalf of His deeply-afflicted people. Look, the Levites are already beginning to make ready the altar of sacrifice; do you pray for the deliverance of Israel, and that the Lord will send us the Messiah before long. — Stay here until I come to fetch you. It is time for me to go to the hall Gasith to take part in the Council."

The hall known as Gasith formed the southwest angle of the ground floor. When Joseph entered the spacious council chamber which was panelled with cedar and richly gilt, he found the greater number of the benches, arranged in three tiers, already filled; but the throne-like chair of the High-Priest was as yet empty, and a considerable number of the Priests, Scribes and Ancients of the people were standing in the centre of the hall, engaged in animated conversation. Among them stood Eleazar, relating with gleaming eyes and vehement language, the latest of the Governor's acts of violence.

"Here comes Joseph Ben Matthias, the most learned of our scribes, let us hear what he will say to this unexampled occurrence," said one of the Priests.

"The shameless abduction of a Jewish maiden!" —

"That rascally Roman!" — "The daughter of so distinguished an Israelite!" — "The child of a Rabbi who deserves to be made High-Priest!" — Such were some of the indignant outcries of the listeners.

On the other hand voices from the benches were heard to cry: "Silence! Let us do nothing rashly!" — "We will not oppose force by force!" — "You will bring about the destruction of the city and the temple unless you learn to restrain your tongues."

Thus one said one thing, and one another, and the confusion was so great that a man could hardly hear his own voice. The entrance of the High-Priest only produced a slight lull. Ananias was not a man calculated to have much influence in the Sanhedrim. Like most of his predecessors since Caiaphas was deposed, he had purchased the office of High-Priest, and now sought to recoup himself with interest by tithes and other taxes. He was a tall wide-shouldered man, with a rubicund visage and coarse features. "What is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed. "Cannot you be silent when the High-Priest comes in to the Council chamber? Take your seats, all of you, and let us hear what is the matter. Only be quick about it, go straight to the mark, for the hour of the morning-sacrifice is approaching, and I must put on the sacerdotal vestments, as soon as the six priests who have gone to king Agrippa to fetch them have returned. What a shame it is that the High-Priest's vestments should not be kept in his house, or in the temple, but should be in the keeping of this royal personage, who is as much of a heathen as of a Jew!"

In fact as a last vestige of his kingly power, Agrippa II. had been granted the right of nominating the High-Priest and had been given a sort of supervision over the temple services by the Romans. It was in reference to this right, as a response to Ananias' last question that an aged man, whose eyes were dimmed by years, slowly ejaculated: "The sceptre has departed from Juda, ever since the great grandfather of the monarch who puts this slight upon the priesthood ousted the last of the Asmaneans from the throne. Search and see if the Messiah has not come already, for the prophets pre-

dicted that he would come when the dominion departed from Juda."

"Stop that nonsense, Baruch," said Ananias addressing the last speaker. "You have got quite senile. When the Messiah comes, He will make His coming known to the High-Priest, and work undeniable miracles as a proof of His divine mission. We have not come hither to discuss this question, but to take council together as to whether we shall lay an accusation against Florus before the Syrian Legate who arrived in Jerusalem yesterday. I wish to hear your opinion on this matter. And mark one thing; if we cannot succeed in getting him deposed, we had better keep silence altogether. For if he should still be left in office after we have lodged complaints against him, he will naturally chastise us with scorpions, instead of, as hitherto, with scourges. What is your advice, Ezechias?"

The individual addressed replied that Florus had just been guilty of another act of violence, that cried to heaven for vengeance, since he had forcibly carried off the daughter of the Rabbi Sadoc of Antioch, a man well-known and highly esteemed, the affianced bride of his nephew, the Captain of the Temple-guard. He called on Eleazar to repeat his story, and bring forward two or three witnesses to corroborate the truth of it, before they proceeded further. This was accordingly done.

The High-Priest moved uneasily in his cushioned seat, for he suspected the use Eleazar and his party would make of this cause of complaint. In fact the chief member of the Zealots, Meir Ben Belga, advocated an open revolt against the Romans in no measured words. The day of vengeance was come at last. While the impression made by this shameful act was fresh, the three millions of pilgrims who had come up to the Feast, would rise up like one man and put Florus and Gallus, who was not a whit better, to death, as they richly deserved. The handful of Romans in Jerusalem could do nothing against such overwhelming odds. These millions against some three cohorts! Let the High-Priest, let the Chief Council say but a word to the people, and before the sunset that day behind the hills of

Judea, a new Passover would have been kept, a new deliverance of Israel from a worse than Egyptian bondage!

The speaker's eyes kindled: "Give us a man like Judas Maccabæus," he cried, "and Judah is saved. We have such a man, here he stands, the valiant leader of our guard, Israel's sword and charioteer! Hail Conqueror of the Romans! for that you will conquer is certain, since the God of our Fathers cannot forsake His people and His temple. He has pledged Himself to stand by us as long as we do not forsake Him. And when did Israel serve the Lord with greater fidelity than now? There is not a strange god in the length and breadth of the land, unless it be the idols of the Romans and the abominations of the Nazarites, both of which we will exterminate. Trust therefore in the Lord, He is mighty, He is faithful to His promises. Our enemies shall be burnt up like chaff by the fire of His wrath. Blow the trumpet therefore, blow the martial trumpet in Sion. Death to our foes and victory, eternal glory to His chosen people!"

Thus spoke Meir Ben Belga, and spoke with a warmth which carried away his audience. A large proportion of the Council sprang to their feet, and enthusiastically expressed their concurrence with him. The High-Priest changed colour; he had not known the faction of the Zealots to be so strong and so determined. But he took courage, since he perceived that Ben Belga had not the majority on his side. All the landed proprietors, all who counted the costs of what they undertook, would not hear of employing force.

"How could we possibly enter upon a war with Rome?" Ezechias exclaimed. "It would be sheer madness! Even supposing that we succeeded in annihilating the cohorts in Rome and the legion that is in Antioch, would not these conquerors of the world pour troops upon troops into our land, stamp out the most valorous resistance and take a fearful vengeance, visiting Jerusalem and our sacred temple with fire and sword? Brethren, bear this injustice patiently, until the Lord gives us a token that He will come to the aid of His oppressed people, until He sends us the long-desired Messiah."

Joseph Ben Matthias, the leader of the moderate party, at last prevailed. The proposal he made was couched in calm, prudent language; he extolled the courage and resolution of the Zealots and praised the caution and wariness of their opponents. He then asserted that war must only be resorted to when all other means failed. The Legate Gallus, from all he heard, was no friend to Florus, a deputation might therefore be sent to him, consisting of the High-Priest and the whole of the Sanhedrim, who would put before him, clearly and concisely, the principal grievances which they had against Florus, not omitting of course the shameful act of the foregoing night, and he really thought that Gallus would, on the strength of these charges, induce the Emperor to recall Florus. "And if this measure should prove ineffectual, the Scribe concluded, I would advise a deputation being sent to Nero himself, who is at present in Greece; he is by no means inaccessible to flattery, and fair words cost nothing. And if all this should be of no avail, we can always have recourse to the sword. I believe, moreover that in the direst distress of our people we may confidently expect that the Messiah will come to rescue Israel; for I hold with Baruch, that the time of his advent, as predicted by the prophets cannot be far distant, nay, it is my opinion that he is already born."

The words of the learned Rabbi flowed like oil from his lips, and calmed the storm, even though the Zealots yielded very reluctantly to the opinion of the majority. It was resolved that after the evening sacrifice, as soon as the Sabbath was ended, the whole Council should repair in a body, in solemn procession together with the people, to Herod's palace, and there, supported by the populace, lay before the Syrian Legate the complaints against the Governor. As the High-Priest was not conversant with either Latin or Greek, Joseph Ben Matthias was chosen as spokesman.

Some Levites now entered announcing that the sacred vestments were ready and the time had come for the morning sacrifice. Glad to have an excuse for putting an end to the unpleasant discussion, the High-Priest



was about to rise, when the aged Baruch begged to be allowed to speak a few words. In accents that were feeble, yet plainly audible throughout the spacious hall, he began: "Brethren, Priests and Doctors in Israel, listen to me once more, before I am gathered to my fathers. Ananias tells me, it is true, that my years have made me childish; but old age demands respect, and children often utter truths which adults shrink from enunciating. I have to accuse myself of having three times withheld my witness to the truth, once when the two men were brought before us in this very Council chamber, who had healed the lame man, whom we all knew so well, in the name of Jesus—" <sup>1)</sup>

Baruch could get no further. His voice was drowned in the uproar that arose, and not the Zealots alone, but many of the moderate party fell upon him, regardless of his snow-white hair, crying: "Turn him out!" "Stone him," "Cast him from the pinnacle of the temple." It was with difficulty that Joseph and a few others, succeeded in rescuing the old man from the hands of these fanatics. "Do not desecrate the festival! You will render yourselves unclean if you shed blood!" they cried. Finally they prevailed upon the rest to confine the aged man in one of the cells in the upper story of the temple building until the Days of the Passover were ended. When at a later period a messenger was sent to set him free, it was discovered that he had expired in the peace of the Lord.

Now the trumpets sounded for the morning sacrifice and the High-Priest hastened to don his vestments. He then advanced, accompanied by hundreds of Priests arrayed in garments of dazzling white, to the altar of sacrifice, in order to offer the victim of atonement, which was symbolical of the Victim once offered upon the cross. How astonished Nathanael was to see the magnificent vestments of the High-Priest, the blue garment which, worn over an under garment or tunic of white linen, reached down to the feet and was bordered with fringe, in which golden bells and pomegranates were intermingled, glittering and tinkling at every movement of the

<sup>1)</sup> Acts of the Apostles ch. 3.

Priest. Besides this there was the stomacher shining with gold embroidery, and the breast-plate composed of twelve precious stones on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. But what the boy regarded with greatest veneration was the mitre of fine linen, and the circlet of gold that encompassed the High-Priest's head, and on which was engraved the four letters comprising the name of God, which was considered too sacred for human tongue to utter.

The fire burning up on the altar, quickly consumed the sacrificial victim. Blood and wine, poured on the altar steps, flowed in streams upon the ground. From one end of the temple to the other resounded the voices of the double row of white-robed singers, chanting the psalms to an accompaniment of harps and cymbals, the refrain being taken up by the people, thousands and thousands of voices both in the inner and outer courts of the temple echoing through the sacred building like the roar of mighty waters. The intervals between the verses were marked by a flourish of trumpets. When at last the High-Priest came back out of the Holy of holies, and, standing on the highest step of the sanctuary gave the blessing to all Israel, the eyes of many, even of the men, were moist with tears of emotion. The whole ceremony made a deep impression on Nathanael; as he walked home by Joseph's side, he kept repeating: "Where is there a God like the God of our Fathers? Where is He worshipped as we worship Him? Where is there a temple so sacred, so splendid as our temple?"

Yet in a comparatively short time Christ's prediction was to be fulfilled, and not a stone left standing on a stone in that gorgeous structure, because Israel rejected her true High-Priest. Of that the child naturally knew nothing, but in the heart of his companion there was a lurking fear that some terrible judgment would overtake his people, although his pride would not allow him to acknowledge how grievously that people had transgressed the law of the Lord.

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NOTE.—The measurements and the description of the temple are taken principally from Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, V, 5.) In order to give a better general idea of the dimensions of the

buildings, the following data are added to the birdseye view and the ground plan appended to this volume. The whole area enclosed within the outer colonnade was 980 feet long and about 1640 feet wide. The temple stood upon a raised plain not quite in the centre of this vast space; it occupied a square about 860 feet every way, surrounded by an elegant stone railing.

The so-called fortress surrounded the whole of the inner courts of the temple, the wall of this was 68 feet high on the outside, 44 feet on the inside. An ascent of 12 steps led to the nine gates, the towers of which rose to the height of 68 feet. The Court of the Women, of which Josephus does not give the dimensions, is said in the Talmud to have been 225 feet square; it was surrounded with galleries. In the four corners were rooms for the Nazarites, one for the oblations of oil and wine, another for storing the wood used for burnt offerings, and a fourth destined for the cleansing of lepers. A flight of 15 steps led to the Court of the Israelites, 325 feet long by 225 in breadth; this was chiefly reserved for the use of the Priests and the service of the daily sacrifices. Another flight of 12 steps conducted to the temple itself. The porch was 19 feet long and  $17\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide; the sanctuary 70 ft. long, 35 ft. wide; The Holy of holies was 35 feet in depth. About the sides of the temple were small houses three stories high built on to the height of about 105 feet.

"The outward aspect of the temple, writes Josephus (l. c. V. 5, 6.) in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes; for it was covered with plates of gold of great weight, and at the first rising of the sun it reflected back a very fiery splendour, and made those who looked on it turn away their eyes as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers when they were at a distance like a mountain covered with snow, for those parts of it which were not gilt were exceedingly white, being of white marble."

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## CHAPTER 15.

### Suppliants for Protection.

Queen Berenice had been amongst the worshippers present at the morning sacrifice. When she was in Jerusalem, she made a point of conforming externally to all the requirements of the mosaic law, she considered it politic to do so. In Judea the Herodians were Jews; in Rome they acknowledged the divinity of the Emperor. Her sister Drusilla had accompanied her to the temple; surrounded by a bevy of menials, they had been borne in litters as far as the bridge leading from the Upper town to the King's Cloisters and the Court of the Gentiles. There they were obliged to alight, and finish the way on foot. Servants carrying silver staves preceded the royal sisters, to enable them to pass through the crowds of pilgrims. Thus they crossed the threshold of the Corinthian gate, and witnessed the ceremonies from seats which were reserved for them in the Women's tribune.

On the conclusion of the service the two Princesses returned to the palace with the same pomp. Berenice remarked to her sister that it was abiding glory for their house that their great-grandfather had erected that magnificent temple. None of the Roman emperors could boast of having constructed anything to compare with it. In fact it had not its equal among all the temples of Rome or of Greece.

"The temple itself would not be much without the sublime ceremonial of worship, and we have to thank Moses for that," Drusilla replied. "He must have been divinely inspired, I never felt so persuaded of it as I did during the service today. It is not right of us to pay so little heed to his laws. I think we ought to break entirely with the Romans, our intercourse with them has brought us no good, and take part exclusively with our own nation."

"Intercourse with the Romans has brought a coronet to our House, and it may yet bring more," Berenice said with gleaming eyes. "Because you happen to have played your cards badly with Felix, you need not inveigh against the conquerors of the world to me."

Drusilla coloured and rejoined: "Do not speak to me of Felix! He made me apostatize from the creed of my fathers!"

"That is a sin which you would soon have pardoned him, if he had only taken you with him to Rome and given you a position there," Berenice said sneeringly. "Now do not be angry with me. I did not get on much better with my royal consort. But why despair because one was unlucky at first. Have patience, we are both free now, and who knows but we may climb a round or two higher on the ladder of power and fortune? If only our brother Agrippa had the sense and intrepidity of his forefathers!"

"What after all is fame and glory? Our great-grandfather, who you were pleased to say rests in God, became a bloody tyrant, the murderer of his wife and his brother, for the sake of glory, and he died in despair. Quiet and peace of mind is what I long for."

"Now you have got into one of your lachrymose moods again, Drusilla! Herod was a great monarch! What do a few drops of blood matter to such as he? Ask Caius Caligula, our father's friend; ask the divine Nero, before whom the world lies prostrate in the dust. Have the goodness not to spoil the Feast-day by your childish sighing after peace of mind. Do not think that magnificent temple, which will be a monument to his memory while time lasts, is worth one or two acts of violence whereby he gained and kept the crown? I am proud of Herod. But enough of that: you will of course come to the banquet tonight which our brother gives in honour of the Legate. See that you look every inch a Queen. The Procurator's wife will be frightfully jealous. You shall have Elpis to dress you, and I will let you have a brand new robe from Alexandria."

By this time the litter had stopped before Berenice's palace, and Eupolemos the major-domo hastened to as-

sist the royal ladies to alight and conduct them into the house. Whilst passing through the portal he whispered to the Queen that the handsome Roman centurion had been waiting already about an hour to see her.

"The centurion Lucius Flavus?" Berenice inquired. "What can he have come for at so unusual an hour. I will certainly see him; Show him into the red room."

"He is not alone. A closely veiled lady, whose dress is of the finest texture, but spotted with blood, is accompanying him," the chamberlain replied.

"A lady! Is it a young or an old lady?" Berenice inquired, with a somewhat annoyed manner.

"It is not easy to say, for as I already remarked, she was closely veiled. She seemed timid. From her walk I should say she was young," Eupolemos answered.

"Let Chloe make her observations, and if she thinks the stranger is not a mere adventuress—no, that she cannot be, the Centurion would not venture to bring her here.—Tell Chloe to go in under the pretext of offering her services to arrange the lady's dress, I cannot bear the sight of blood. Drusilla, do me the favour of coming with me to see these strange visitors."

The two sisters accordingly repaired to the red room, where Berenice had received the Centurion on the preceding day, and seated themselves on the purple cushions, after a slave had relieved them of their richly embroidered mantles.

They had not long to wait before Eupolemos ushered in Lucius and Thamar.

The Rabbi's daughter flung back her veil, and fixed her dark eyes for a moment with something akin to terror on the proud lady who sat before her in her regal splendour. Then her lips quivered and with an entreaty for help and protection she covered her face with her hands and fell on her knees. Berenice was struck with the rare beauty of the girl's pale face and the refined accent of her voice; she turned almost mockingly to the Centurion, as if to ask: Is this your lady-love?

Lucius understood her look, and the blood rushed to his cheek, as he said, "I am bringing to you one of the daughters of your people, august Queen, an orphan who

craves your protection against a powerful enemy. She is the daughter of a Rabbi of a good ancient family, and the enemy whom we dread is unfortunately our Procurator, Gessius Florus."

"Gessius Florus!" exclaimed the astonished Queen, as she extended her arm, round which a golden serpent was twisted, towards Thamar, kindly bidding her rise, and take a seat at her feet. "Tell me all about it, dear child, you are fleeing from the Procurator? Speak in Aramæic if you like, if you are not fluent with Greek."

Thamar however spoke Greek extremely well, and when she had overcome her first diffidence, she related the sad occurrences of the last two nights in so charming a manner, that she not only won the heart of the more impressionable Drusilla, but even the esteem of the proud Berenice.

"Poor child!" exclaimed Drusilla, "your father died only last night, and that scoundrel of a Procurator would have carried you off from his dying bed, but for a fortunate chance, and the arrival of this noble Roman to rescue you! Sister, we cannot give this daughter of our people up to that insolent thief; let me take care of her, if you do not wish to retain her here. She will be a welcome companion for me."

"Of course we will not give her up to that horrid Florus," Berenice replied. "I am glad that the Syrian Legate happens to be here, as this occurrence will give us a handle against Florus, and perhaps bring about his fall. How I should rejoice to be rid of him, and that intolerable Cleopatra! I must consult with my brother Agrippa at once, so that the affair may come in the right form to Cestius' ears. But you, brave Centurion, are you not afraid of Florus' vengeance? Be on your guard!"

Lucius shrugged his shoulders and said: "What can he do to me? He is not my commander, but Gallus. And after all, I care not what happens. You would not have acted otherwise, august Queen, if you had found this unfortunate orphan as I did this morning, overwhelmed with grief. Pardon me for bringing her to you. She appears to have no relatives here, none at least that

she can trust, and since I only arrived here yesterday as a stranger, I knew no other hospitable roof in the town except yours. Now I have the honour to take leave of you. If your Majesty will allow me, I will call in now and again to inquire after your health and the welfare of this maiden."

Berenice willingly gave her permission and graciously dismissed the officer. Thamar stood up and taking both his hands in hers, said with a look more eloquent than words: "May the God of our fathers reward you for what you have done for me, O good and generous Roman! To take pity on the widow and orphan is to do Him service; may He lead you to the knowledge of Him and make you one of His chosen people!"

Lucius glanced at the royal sisters, and observed that a tear glistened in Drusilla's eye, while a contemptuous smile played round Berenice's finely cut lips. With a profound reverence he quitted the apartment.

As the Centurion traversed the narrow, crowded streets on his way back to the Pretorium, Thamar's last words rang in his ears. "May He grant you to become one of His own people!" "What did the girl mean by it?" he asked himself. "That I should become a Jew? Absurd! But it is a pity that she is a Jewess; otherwise by the great Diana, I really might be tempted by those wonderful eyes of hers, still more by the fascination of her delightful childlike innocence, to take a step of which no centurion whose ambition is to be a General, ought so much as to think. So put this nonsense out of your head, Lucius. It will be better not to go and see that damsel any more. Berenice's sister seems to have a kind heart, no doubt she will look after the poor child." Thus Lucius sought to shake off the impression Thamar had made on him, but all the while he was conscious that it was impossible to forget her.

On reaching the palace, the gate of which was strictly guarded, he went at once to report himself to Claudius Lysias the tribune, who received him with the words: "It is a good thing that you have come back. Florus is in a fearful rage; he has asked for you twice. You must go to him at once. Instead of the fair maiden



whom he sent for, Metilius brought him last night an old scarecrow, whom he instantly turned out of doors. He imagines you played Metilius this trick, and have kept the damsel for yourself. Take care what you say to him. Remember that here in Jerusalem the rods and axes of the lictors are at his complete command."

"I am an officer of the twelfth legion and a Roman citizen, and can appeal to Gallus or to the Emperor for protection," Lucius exclaimed.

"You will do better if you do not put yourself in a position to require their protection," the tribune answered. "The Governors do much as they please in the provinces, especially if they have a consort who is a favorite with Poppea Sabina. Florus knows how to get you put out of the way secretly, if you offend him. Now go, I have warned you."

The Governor received Lucius in a very bad temper. The Centurion however was on his guard. He had not heard of the expedition to Bethania until long after Metilius' departure, so that he was able to prove that it would have been impossible for him to interfere with the Centurion's orders, even if he had wished to do so. This he quietly told the Governor. "But," the latter insisted, "you rode out to Bethania this morning by the Sheep's gate?"

"That I certainly did. But Metilius must have been back before then. At least I did not meet him either there or anywhere else on the way."

"What business had you to go there?"

"An old woman had asked my assistance."

"An *old* woman? Now confess that it was the daughter of the Rabbi whom you rescued from Ben Gioras' power. Why did you not place the maiden and the Rabbi's property under my protection yesterday?"

"I had no authority for doing that."

"Because you are a Boeotian blockhead! If I had not sent Metilius out, the whole of the booty would now be in the hands of the brigands, from whom Metilius was just in time to rescue it. And as for their carrying off the damsel, you will have to answer for that!"

"She has not been carried off. She is safely lodged in Queen Berenice's palace!"

"The Herodian viper! You probably took her there yourself, as you know so certainly where she is?"

"Oh yes, not more than an hour ago. I think you can hardly blame me for placing an orphan under the protection of a princess of her nation."

"Certainly not!" rejoined the Governor with an angry laugh, casting a vicious look at the young officer. Lucius thought for a moment Florus was going to fly at him; but he controlled his rage, and said in a cold tone of forced politeness: "You can go, Centurion. We shall find some occasion to remember the good services you have rendered us."

Not long after Florus had an interview with the Legate which did not tend to improve his temper. Cestius Gallus had taken the Procurator to task for a long list of public deeds of violence and injustice, and wound up by saying he certainly must report him to the Emperor, if he did not administer the province more prudently. The Roman Senate, he said, and the Emperor wink at many little things we may do to further our own interests. But there is a medium. *Sunt certi denique fines!* We must not overstep the limits, and do anything to instigate the people to revolt. And that you have done!

"My good Gallus," the Procurator replied, "I have often expressed to you my conviction that I could do the Empire no better service than if I were to compel it to cut this cancer out of its healthy body. I am prepared to prove to Emperor and Senate that I am right; this accursed Jewish race with its God who is an irreconcilable enemy to our gods will never be a sound member of our universal empire. If I promote an insurrection, the salutary knife will have to be used."

"That is your way of talking, I understand it, and I also know what are the real motives that actuate you. Do not think to throw dust in my eyes. Well, I must go to Caesarea tomorrow. Let me at least have the satisfaction of your assurance that you will maintain peace and tranquillity here, at any rate for another year, until my time of office expires. After that you may follow the dictates of your own desires."

"So be it then. For a year I will spare this hateful

nation, if you will promise not to raise any difficulties for me in Rome, and provided these people do not irritate me too much."

"That is a promise with many means of evasion," Gallus rejoined. "Well, I cannot compel you. Only do not trust too much to the good word of Nero's wife. I will make no representations at Rome, unless the welfare of the State compels me to do so."

Florus answered with feigned amiability. "Many thanks, most excellent Gallus; you shall see today that it will not be my fault if an insurrection takes place. I am told that the Jewish priests intend to lay their grievances before you, and pose as suppliants for your protection. I was going to ask you not to listen to them; but now I say receive them graciously, and, for aught I care, give me a scolding in their presence, that they may go away content. Tomorrow I shall of course escort you to Caesarea with one of the cohorts."

When Florus was alone, he said to himself: "As long as the welfare of the State does not compel him, he will make no difficulties for me at Rome! I understand what that means, and his hints about Nero too. It is high time that war broke out. I will only wait until I have got my property safely placed in Caesarea, and my wife also—for I cannot do without her assistance. This centurion Lucius shall stay behind, and that old moralist Lysias can remain here as well. Let them see how they can escape out of these walls with a whole skin, when once the dogs of war are let loose."

Agrippa had invited the Legate and the Procurator with the officers of the Staff to a banquet that evening. But as it was not safe for the two Roman officials to betake themselves to the Asmonean Palace without a strong military escort, on account of the excited state of the populace, and the crowds that filled the streets, the Legate declined the invitation, asking the king and his two sisters to spend the evening at the castle instead. But the king and still more the proud Berenice, thought this derogatory to their dignity, so they in their turn made an excuse. "He wants to stand well with the Jews. There is no dependance to be placed on these

Herodians," Florus told the Legate. The fact was, Agrippa had heard of the projected appeal of the Priests, and did not care to be seen at the Governor's side, when the Sanhedrim brought their charges against him.

Florus gave orders to his servants secretly and quietly to pack all the gold and jewels which he possessed in Jerusalem; happily some time back he had taken the precaution to have the greater part conveyed to Caesarea. His wife certainly had a good deal of trouble in superintending the packing by her slaves of her dresses, which were laid in long chests, that the rich and costly materials might not be creased. The grand robe of Indian silk embroidered with gold in which she was to have appeared before her guests, now had to be put away with the others, since Agrippa, to her great vexation, had declined the invitation. But Cleopatra consoled herself with the thought that Berenice preferred not to enter the lists with so formidable a rival as herself.

Meanwhile Florus sent for Melech the chief gaoler, and ordered him to conduct Ben Gioras to his presence without letting it be known. "Your confederates," he said to the brigand-chief, "have offered me a talent to set you free. If you will swear to bring me a second talent within a month's time, and besides this to satisfy the claim of the Centurion who demands the price set on your head, you may make your escape through yonder window. How you will settle matters with the Centurion—his name is Lucius Flavus, he is remaining here in Jerusalem—is your affair, not mine. One thing more; you must agree not to molest me, or allow your men to molest me on the way to Caesarea. Do you understand? Swear it to me by the highest of your gods."

"I will not swear what I cannot fulfil," Ben Gioras replied. "The talent which my confederates offer, must content you. As for the Centurion, whose face I shall not soon forget, you can leave me to settle, as you call it, with him. Furthermore I pledge my word that my men shall not interfere with you or your possessions on your way hence; more I cannot promise."

The Governor thought for a moment; then he said: "Very well. Take the oath."

"My promise does not extend to Cestius Gallus, or any other Roman," the bandit remarked. "On the other hand be it observed that if you do not set me at liberty, my men will assuredly cut you and your handful of soldiers to pieces on the road to Caesarea."

"What do I care about Cestius Gallus and the rest! Swear that you will keep your word!" Florus rejoined.

Ben Gioras took the desired oath. The Governor then made him climb out of the window, and showed him where to hide in a thick clump of cypresses in the garden, till the procession of priests had passed through the courtyard, when it would be easy to mix in the crowd that would throng after them, and escape without attracting observation.

"I should not have let him go had I not been aware that the Jews would not dare to revolt without him," the Governor said to himself as he watched the man disappear.

Presently a blast of trumpets sounding from the temple announced that the evening sacrifice was at an end. The Governor told himself that the deputation would soon be coming. He gave orders to Lysias the tribune to put the whole of the garrison under arms, and make arrangements that would allow of the gates being closed at a moment's notice.

"Place your most trustworthy men on either side of the gateway," he said, "and if I raise my hand in this manner, let the gates be instantly shut, even though you have to clear the space with the sword. One thing more. Tomorrow morning I shall accompany the Legate to Caesarea with an escort of two cohorts. You will remain here with the third, to keep order. The Centurion Lucius Flavus will also stop here, in the place of the Centurion Aelius Vafer. I will arrange that with the Legate. Now quick to your posts! They will be here directly."

In fact the indistinct murmur of an approaching multitude was already heard. Like a volume of water the crowd swept onward, and in a few minutes the wide space before the castle was a sea of heads. Then the cry arose: Make way for the priests! and the living

waves divided and rolled back, leaving a narrow passage for the priests to pass along, and closing immediately behind them. The leaders now appeared at the half-opened gate, and crossed the courtyard, which the soldiers kept clear up to the foot of the long flight of marble steps. About a hundred Scribes and Levites came first; they were followed by the Priests in white vestments, some of them men of most venerable appearance; last of all came the High-Priest, in his gorgeous official vestments, surrounded by some of the principal members of the Council, selected on account of their high birth or advanced age.

The good-natured Legate was astonished at the sight of this solemn deputation. He whispered to the Governor that the Roman Senate could not have presented a more majestic appearance. "You must invite them into the great hall, and give them the best places," he said.

Florus answered with a laugh that they would consider it made them unclean! "You do not know the arrogance of this set of men. They look on us as unclean beasts. You shall just see for yourself." So saying, he asked the deputation if they would not walk into the hall, whereupon they raised their hands in horror, and declared such a thing was impossible.

When quiet was restored, the High-Priest addressed a few words to the Legate in Aramæic, and on his replying in Greek that he did not understand that language, at a sign from Ananias, Joseph Ben Matthias stepped forward, and began a carefully prepared speech in Greek, in which an appeal was made to the Legate for protection against the enormities committed by the Governor. It was well for the latter that few amongst the crowd who stood listening on the square without understood the language in which this speech was delivered, otherwise they would perhaps have been carried away by excitement and taken the law into their own hands. Florus only laughed, declaring that a great part of the charges could not be proved, others were mere misrepresentations and exaggerations, and the rest old-established customs and rights appertaining to this office, for Procurators must have their dues as well as Priests their

tithes. "To take one instance," he said addressing Gallus, "there is this ridiculous story about carrying off a young girl. It all arose from an absurd mistake, as Metilius Celer can testify. As soon as I discovered the blunder, I let the girl go."

"Where did she go to?" cried an eager voice out of the crowd. "I am the Captain of the Temple-guard, I must know what has become of her, the damsel is my affianced bride."

"What does it matter to me where she is now? Metilius knows that she was dismissed this morning, as soon as I was aware of the error. For aught I care you may ask Queen Berenice, she is said sometimes to extend her royal protection to those who ask it."

"That will do, Florus," the Legate then said. "I rejoice that you are able to clear yourself so triumphantly from this accusation; the others doubtless are, as you assert, either destitute of proof or else mere exaggerations. At the same time I must request you to incline rather more to leniency and mercy in the discharge of the duties of your office, and avoid all appearance of injustice.<sup>1</sup>) As for you, Priests and people of Israel, I earnestly exhort you not to lend your ear to agitators and discontented persons. Consider the might of Rome, remember how she has subjugated the whole world. Even quite recently Vespasian has conquered the isles of Britain in the far west, isles the inhabitants of which are infinitely stronger and more warlike than your petty nation. I warn you, that if, blinded by mad folly, you ventured to raise a finger against us, our legions would quickly crush you. You would be exterminated with your wives and children, and this city of yours, with the temple of which you are so proud, would be levelled with the ground."

Thereupon with a wave of his hand he gave the Priests to understand that they might withdraw, and took Florus' arm to return with him into the palace. Very few of the people or even of the priests had understood the Legate's speech, as it was delivered in Greek. But they understood all the better for that the contemp-

<sup>1</sup>) Josephus. Wars of the Jews, II. 14, 3.

tuous laugh and the defiant attitude of the Procurator, and when, at the conclusion of the address, they observed that those of the priests who were conversant with the Greek language, stopped their ears, a wild cry arose. "He has threatened to destroy the holy places! — The insolent Governor only derides our grievances! — See how scornfully they are sending our priests about their business! — Death to the Romans! — Vengeance!" such were some of the confused shouts that filled the air. For an instant it seemed probable that the unarmed crowd would attack the soldiers, but the latter quickly stepped in between the priests and the people, forming with their levelled spears so formidable a barrier that none ventured to advance. Even Eleazar saw that the storm must not be allowed to burst then. Raising his voice he called aloud: "Stand back! Do nothing now. Would you sacrifice your priests? When tomorrow's feast is over, we will arm ourselves and take a bloody revenge!"

His words took effect; the multitude fell back, and the soldiers made a narrow way between their ranks to allow the priests in single file to leave the courtyard.

All however were not allowed thus to escape. Florus had heard Eleazar's threat and he feared lest it should be carried into execution that very night, before he had succeeded in getting clear of the city with his wife and the remaining portion of his treasure. Accordingly he proposed to the Legate that the High-Priest and some of the principal priests should be detained as hostages.

"If we detain the High-Priest, there will infallibly be an insurrection," Gallus replied.

"Well, at any rate that impudent spokesman shall have time to reflect at leisure on the charges against me which he threatens to lay before the Emperor," and the Governor gave orders to detain Joseph Ben Matthias as a hostage, in spite of the indignant protest he and his companions made.

The scene we have just witnessed confirmed the Governor in his determination to leave Jerusalem at once. "The Jews have now decided upon a revolt," he said to himself. "The Captain of the temple will infect them with his fury. They will take up arms and storm the



castle perhaps even before tomorrow's festival is over. Ben Gioras and the thousands under his command will make common cause with them. It is high time for us to be off, before the gathering storm bursts in all its violence. How could we, with our handful of soldiers, make head against a mass like that which besieged us today? The cohort I leave behind will stand a poor chance. Well, well, I shall not weep over the loss of their commander, that surly Lysias, still less for that of the young puppy Lucius. May they all fall victims to the anger of the Jews, if I can get away safely. And if the whole city with its hateful temple is burnt down as a punishment for the revolt, nothing more will there be for me to fear in regard to being called to account about my administration. Rebels cannot expect to have justice done them."

As soon as night fell the Governor gave orders that all should be packed and the horses saddled. Then while he was seated at table with the Legate and a few other officers he caused the tidings to be brought by Metilius that Ben Gioras had escaped, and it was thought that he meditated an attack on Caesarea, as that city was just then without a garrison. This announcement had the desired effect. It was arranged that all the available troops should hasten to the defence of the menaced city. Accordingly about the second watch of the night the Governor and Legate quitted Jerusalem as quietly as possible at the head of four cohorts. Only one cohort under Lysias' command was left to preserve peace in the disaffected city; Lucius Flavus was also attached to this company.

"If they do not venture upon an insurrection now, these Jews are more prudent or more cowardly than I think them," Gessius Florus muttered, as he rode by the side of the Legate out of the gateway of the Women's tower.

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NOTE.—Josephus tells us: "When Cestius Gallus came to Jerusalem upon the approach of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the people came about him not fewer than three millions; these besought him to commiserate the calamities of their nation, and cried out upon Florus as the bane of their country. But as he was present and stood by Cestius, he laughed scornfully at their words."  
(Wars of the Jews, II. 14, 8.)

## CHAPTER 16.

### Christian Charity.

By the time that the service of the little Christian community on the night following Good Friday was over, the Sabbath morning had well-nigh dawned. Nicenor the deacon invited Eusebius to go home with him for the rest of the night, and the devout women took his nieces to Seraphia's house. Hence it came to pass that Sabbas the porter forgot the letter which he had to give to the steward of the Bethania estate.

As soon as the trumpets sounded at break of day, Eusebius roused himself from sleep, which still hung heavy on his eyelids, and started on his homeward way. He was conscious of an unaccountable feeling of apprehension, and reproached himself for having left his wife Salome alone with the strangers. When he got to the gate, he had to knock to the porter to come and let him out.

"Peace be with you, Brother, but pray do not knock so loud, and wake up my wife and children, who are tired after the long service last night," Sabbas said, rubbing his eyes. "Oh, it is you, Eusebius. It just occurs to me I had a letter to give you—what have I done with it? The messenger who brought it said there was no hurry. Ah, to be sure—in the pocket of my cloak, there it is. I hope it brings good news, and I wish you a happy Easter tomorrow!"

Eusebius quickly tore open the letter and ran his eye over the few lines it contained. The colour left his cheek, and he exclaimed: "How unfortunate! I wish you had given me the letter sooner. When was it brought?"

"Just after the service commenced. I did not like to disturb you, besides the messenger, one of your gardeners, said there was no hurry."

Eusebius read the note again. "'We are threatened by a powerful enemy, come home at once.' I fear I

shall be too late. And what good could I do? I will ask Nicanor, perhaps he will advise me." So saying, he returned to the Deacon's house and knocked at Nicanor's door.

He was admitted instantly, for the pious deacon had spent the remainder of the night in meditation on our Lord's Passion, and therefore did not require rousing. When he had read the letter, he said: "The powerful enemy, whom Salome thinks it more prudent not to mention by name, is not the brigands. It is either the Captain of the Temple-guard or the Governor. If either of them—more probably the latter, made a night attack you would not have been able to prevent it, if you had been there. But who knows what may have happened, and whether help may not be urgently needed. I will go with you forthwith to Bethania, and as a precaution, we may as well take some of the Brothers with us."

"Are not you afraid of breaking the Sabbath?" Eusebius asked.

"Nonsense," the deacon replied. "Have you forgotten how our Lord castigated the exaggerated rigorism of the Pharisees, who accused Him of violating the Sabbath because He healed a man on the Sabbath day?"

"You are right, Nicanor. Let us go then. But shall we not take my nieces with us?"

"Leave them in peace in Seraphia's house. If any misfortune has happened, which God forbid, they will know of it soon enough, and if we want them they can soon be fetched. We will take Paulinus with us and one or two of the young Levites who are in the house. Just let me say a word to the deacon Timon, and take the gold pyx, so that in any emergency I may be provided with the Bread of Life."

A few minutes later the little caravan was on its way to Bethania. Taking a bye-path which led over the crest of Mount Olivet, avoiding the high-road, they reached the farm before the third hour of the day. They entered the garden by a back gate, and were met by the faithful Silas with exclamations of grief and alarm. It was some time before by dint of questioning him, Eusebius could learn what had occurred during the night. The poor

fellow seemed almost frightened out of his senses; the brigands, the Romans, the Temple-guard were all mixed up in his narrative in hopeless confusion.

"When at last they carried our good mistress with them, and the Romans came up and a fight went on before our very doors, we all went off and hid in the thicket on Mount Olivet. What good would any valour have been against those rough fellows? In a twinkling the robbers got the better of the Temple-guard and the Romans mastered them both."

"Have the Romans carried off my poor Salome?" Eusebius inquired.

"The Romans or the brigands, I do not know which. All that I know for certain is that the Sheik of the Bedouins threatened to put our good mistress to a dreadful death if you do not deliver up the Rabbi's two bags to him in the cave at the lone ilex tree before the next new-moon. Pray do so, Master! For the Rabbi has died in the meantime, and his daughter has gone off with the Centurion who brought them both to us."

"How was that?" Nicanor asked. "Was the Centurion one of the band of Romans who perpetrated the night attack, and did the Rabbi's daughter leave her father to die alone?"

"No, I must do her the justice to say that she stayed by her father right bravely. When the day dawned we could hear her agonized cries for help in our hiding-place. I ventured out, to go to her assistance. But when I saw the Centurion galloping up on his white horse I thought it was more prudent to go back and hide again. Indeed I still feel the terrible fright of last night in all my limbs. Looking out from among the bushes in a little while I saw the Centurion ride off with the Rabbi's daughter. Poor child, she seemed almost beside herself! She wrung her hands, and at last let the Roman take her up like a child. It is not more than a quarter of an hour ago, if you had come the usual way, you would certainly have met them on the road."

"Is the maiden's father really dead? I did not consider his wound so dangerous," Eusebius rejoined.

"I believe he is. At least so Eliud says: he brought

the Centurion over at daybreak. I have not seen the body. We have only just ventured back into the house, it is a wonder that it is still standing, as the robbers might easily have set fire to it. I believe they would have done so, but for our prudent withdrawal which led them to suppose an ambush—”

Eusebius here cut short the harangue wherewith the worthy gardener sought to excuse his very natural alarm, by bidding him follow him at once to the Rabbi's room.

On reaching the couch whereon the Rabbi lay motionless, Nicanor, who was skilled in the medical art, made a careful examination of the patient, whose body was neither cold nor stiff, but both his breath and the action of the heart were imperceptible. “Perhaps it is only a deathlike swoon,” the Deacon said. “You are right, the wound is not sufficient of itself to cause death. It appears to have been bleeding again, but the internal hemorrhage is but slight. Perhaps there is some obstruction in the windpipe.”

Before their conversion to Christianity both Eusebius and Nicanor belonged to the sect of the Essenes, the members of which were all instructed in therapeutics; Nicanor in fact enjoyed a great and well-deserved reputation as a surgeon.

He now gave directions that the apparently lifeless body of the Rabbi should be laid in such a position that the head and chest were lower than the rest of the body, and then proceeded to strike the back and neck gently with the palm of his hand. Presently a little blood was seen to trickle out of the mouth. Every effort was then made to restore respiration, and after a short time the deacon thought he observed a flickering motion of the lungs and heart, and expressed his belief that life was not extinct. He renewed his exertions with the result that soon no doubt remained that the Rabbi still breathed.

“Thank God, we came here just in time,” Nicanor remarked. He then cleaned and bound up the wound with a skilful hand, and poured a few drops of a reviving cordial down the throat of the still unconscious patient.

"That is all we can do for him at present, we must leave nature to do her healing work. But we cannot nurse him here, recent events having shown that this house is no safe place of refuge. And quiet, undisturbed quiet is above all essential in this case."

After a short consultation it was agreed that the Rabbi should be taken to Nicanor's house in Jerusalem, as soon as the evening of the Sabbath was come. Silas was ordered to have a litter ready at the appointed time.

"There is a chamber next to my own in our dwelling, which I can place at your disposal without any inconvenience," Nicanor said, "and who knows whether we may not be instrumental in saving the Rabbi's soul as well as his body. At any rate our Lord teaches us in the parable of the Good Samaritan that in regard to those who need our help, our charity should not inquire about creeds."

Nicanor gave instructions to Paulinus concerning the treatment the sick man was to receive, and then joined Eusebius, whose grief at the loss of his spouse was for a time superseded by anxiety about his patient. Nicanor sought to console his friend, promising to go himself, as soon as the festival was at an end, to the brigands, and explain to them that the bags they coveted did not belong to Eusebius, and that while the Rabbi lived or his heirs he could not dispose of the property. "Set your mind at rest," he said. "If nothing else avails, I will, with the bishop's permission, offer them a ransom out of the funds of the Church, such as they are. The property of the Church is the property of the poor, and our Lord mentions ransoming captives as a work of charity. Did He not moreover redeem us by His precious blood from the bondage of sin?"

"Then you do not think we should be justified in taking for granted that the opulent Rabbi would willingly give up a portion of his treasure to help those who have got into this trouble for his sake?"

Nicanor replied that when the condition of the sick man allowed of it, they would urge this duty upon him. He then explained to Eusebius that it would be better, he thought, to leave the farmhouse for a time on account

of its lonely situation. "Silas and the other men," he said, "could go on with their work in the garden and on the land, and you can come now and again to superintend them. We might find them a lodging in the village, or they could sleep in the house, if they were not afraid. Your nieces will return with their father to Pella, as soon as the Paschal days are over, they will have plenty to do there making preparations to receive the bishop and the whole community in Jerusalem. I know our reverend prelate believes, as he gave us to understand yesterday evening that the days are at hand when our Lord predicted that flight from Jerusalem would be necessary. Meanwhile your nieces can stay with the devout women, and you can remain with us in the cenacle-house."

Eusebius agreed to this proposal, and they determined to remove all the valuables the house contained to the town, when the Feast was over. Nicanor took charge of the two bags containing the gold and the jewels, which were found untouched in the place where they had been hidden. Then, accompanied by one of the young Levites, he returned to Jerusalem, after paying a farewell visit to the patient and giving strict injunctions as to what was to be done for him.

Eusebius sat by the Rabbi's bedside all the day, renewing the bandages with careful fingers. His thoughts were with Salome in the desert, and many were the prayers he said for her. He fetched the portrait of the Blessed Virgin out of his nieces' room, and hung it on the wall behind the bed, so that he could see it as he sat there. He had seen Mary standing at the foot of the cross, and both she and John had been entertained as honored guests in that very house. Now he felt he could appeal with confidence to her intercession with her divine Son on behalf of himself and his loved ones. A sense of relief came over him, and his trials, bitter as they were, seemed sweet when he thought that she, who was so dear to our Lord, had to drink of the chalice of sorrow with Him. And our Lord promised to His friends a share in His cross as their highest reward and choicest blessing. Surely He knew better than we shortsighted mortals what was for our real good. Thus he encour-

aged himself with the thought that if he was severely tried, it was a proof of our Lord's love, and the fruits of the cross would be salvation and grace.

If this way our Lord infused consolation into the heart of His servant. The sick man lay in a kind of stupor; occasionally he opened his eyes, but closed them again without giving any sign of consciousness. Only when in the dusk of the evening he was lifted up and laid in the litter, did he look around him with a questioning air, and make an effort to speak. Eusebius reassured him with a few kind words; he then relapsed into the same lethargic state and did not stir again whilst he was conveyed to Jerusalem.

We must now return to Thamar, who when the first outburst of grief, which almost deprived her of her senses, was over, gradually regained her selfpossession. Berenice could not tolerate to see doleful faces about her, so she gave the girl over to her sister Drusilla, who caused a pleasant little room, looking on to an inner court of the palace, to be arranged for her. After seeing that all her wants were amply supplied, and appointing a slave to serve her, Drusilla embraced Thamar tenderly, saying: "Try and rest now, my child, and cry yourself out, if you can. May the God of our Fathers comfort you! I shall come back presently and see how you are."

With these kind words Drusilla departed before Thamar could find words to express her gratitude. At first she stood like one stunned in the middle of the room, then she threw herself down on a couch near the window. Was it not all a bad dream, she asked herself. Was her father really dead? If so how could she have left his remains? Then she more clearly remembered the lonely house where she had found herself at day-break alone with her father, she remembered how for all her grief she could not recall him to life, how she had cried aloud for help, but all in vain, and how anguish and terror had seized upon her. Then she seemed to see the Centurion before her, looking so sympathizingly at her, she seemed to hear him trying to console her and persuading her to go away with him. But what could have induced her to leave the side of her dead father,



and go away with a stranger? She knew now; it was the fear of falling into the hands of her affianced husband or of the horrid Governor that drove her to leave, and she felt that she could trust the Centurion entirely.

And now the thought occurred to her, what would her father say if he knew her to be under the roof of the Herodians. He hated that family with bitter hatred, and considered them as a curse to the land. The idea troubled her; from her childhood she had been accustomed to shape her thoughts and feelings by those of her father. But she could not go to Ezechias, who had wooed her for so unworthy a bridegroom, and must therefore rest satisfied with having found shelter and protection for the present. How kind king Herod's granddaughter had been to her! No, she must rather thank God for having come to her succour in her distress.

Thamar grew calmer, and began to look about her. Casting a glance down at the beautiful little garden in the court, she was struck by the forcible resemblance to her own, familiar home at Antioch. Persian carpets and Indian fabrics of a similar description adorned the pavement and the walls, and the little spring in the garden splashed down with the selfsame sound as that which fell into the marble basin at home. Her father had provided for her in a princely manner. "Oh that we had never left that dear house!" she sighed, and the remembrance of her father's affection for her again brought her the relief of tears.

But she soon wiped away her tears, for the uncertainty about her brother's fate pierced her heart like a sword. "How selfish I am," she said to herself, "to forget Benjamin. How bitterly he will weep when he hears that Father is dead! Can I really do nothing for his release? And must I leave the burial of my poor father to strangers? What can have become of the good old Sara? I have no time for fruitless tears, I must speak to Drusilla and see if nothing can be done for my brother and the nurse, and alas! for the dear one who is departed!"

She rose to her feet, and clapped her hands. Her

summons was obeyed by a middle-aged slave, who knelt down before her with her arms crossed on her breast. Thamar, unaccustomed to such servile subservience, bade her rise, and inquired her name.

"I am called Helena in this house, my mistress," the woman replied; her pleasant voice prepossessed Thamar in her favour.

"Helena? Then you are a Greek, and I will speak Greek to you."

"Speak in Aramæic if you please, it is my native language."

"Very well. Should I be disturbing Drusilla, if I asked to see her now?"

"The Princess is with her brother, king Agrippa, at present; but the moment she returns I will give her your message."

"You seem so superior and sensible, Helena, that perhaps I may as well consult you as Drusilla," Thamar said, fixing a scrutinizing look on the slave, whose grave manner and frank countenance certainly inspired one with confidence. "Sit down beside me and let me tell you my sad story."

Helena seated herself at Thamar's feet, and listened with unfeigned sympathy to the account of cruel fate which had overtaken the unhappy girl. She said little, but the very expression of her eyes seemed to give consolation, and the tone of her voice. She said she had acquaintances in the town, and would make inquiries about Sara; as to Benjamin, the brigands would do him no harm as long as they hoped for a ransom, and if they saw no probability of getting one, they would let him go free. She asked if their father had no man of business, or steward, or near relative in Antioch or elsewhere.

Thamar answered that she had never concerned herself about her father's business affairs. "Since the death of my mother, which occurred at Benjamin's birth, when I was still a child, we lived in a very secluded manner. Until my uncle died without children, and father had to manage his business, he devoted himself to study of the Holy Scriptures. Of

late years I have often seen him going over accounts with a little man with a white beard; but whether he is Father's agent, or only a business friend I know not. We have no relatives in Antioch, there are no two poor orphans in the wide world so utterly alone as Benjamin and myself!"

"Do you not remember the name of any of your teachers?" Helena inquired further.

"My father taught me to write and read the Sacred Books. He also gave me instruction in Greek. I learned to play the harp of a blind musician."

"She would not be able to read your letters, even if we found out where she is," the slave rejoined. "But that does not matter. The wealthy Rabbi Sadoc must be well known in Antioch. Ask Drusilla to send a trustworthy messenger thither with letters, to find out your father's agent and acquaint him with your situation. The messenger might bring back a large sum of money, then there would be no difficulty in getting your brother released. In this world almost anything can be done with gold."

"Unfortunately the dead cannot be brought to life again!" Thamar answered. "But we might give my father a grand, a fitting funeral. Ought I not go back to Bethania, in order to see to the interment and order the wailers myself? Alas! how wrong I was to leave him at all!"

"Under the circumstances no other course was open to you. You were compelled to fly from your two enemies. And now it certainly would not be advisable for you to leave the shelter of this house. Besides nothing can be done to-day because of the Sabbath. To-morrow, I feel sure, Princess Drusilla will gladly send two or three of her slaves over to Bethania to fetch your father's remains. Then you can bewail him, and prepare him with cere-cloths and spices to be laid to rest in the grave, until it pleases God to awaken him at the last day."

"You belong to the sect of the Pharisees, so my father and I do; how consoling it is to believe in the resurrection of the dead and life eternal!" Thamar exclaimed.

"Yes, I do believe as holy Job declares, that in the last day I shall rise out of the earth and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see and not another."

"O sister of my soul!" Thamar cried in a sudden burst of emotion. "You are not a slave by birth; if my father's means allow of it, your freedom shall be purchased, and you shall be my friend."

"I am quite happy in my present position, that in which God wishes me to be. Drusilla is a kind mistress, you will like her when you know her. And I have heard of a king's son who of his own free will became a slave in order to set his people free, and the thought of him makes my yoke easy and my burden light."

"What a fanciful girl you are! Tell me that pretty fable."

"Another time, if you please. I hear Drusilla calling me. Besides it is not a fable, it is truth, blessed truth!"

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BOOK II.

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The Insurrection.

## CHAPTER 17.

### Factions in the City.

In due time Simon Ben Gioras made good his escape from the garden of Herod's palace where he had secreted himself and repaired to a narrow street in the poor quarter of the city, called Ophel, to the south of the Temple buildings. There was a tavern there frequented by his followers, hundreds of whom were at that time in Jerusalem, disguised as pilgrims.

"What, you here, Simon! I should sooner have expected to see you hanging on a cross than standing here on your own limbs," cried the landlord, a hump-backed, blear-eyed little man. "You are all the more welcome on that account to me and all of us. I little thought that Florus would accept our first offer, I expected he would bargain for twice or thrice the amount. We would willingly have given three talents or even more, if only to spite Ananus and Eleazar, who would gladly have kept you in prison."

"Ananus is a dastardly wretch, I should not have looked for anything better from him, and I have long known that his son's ambition is to play the part of Israel's chieftain in the war with Rome," Ben Gioras answered. "But let me go into the upper room and bring me something to eat and drink. Those miserable Romans left me to starve."

"Immediately, immediately! I will serve up roast lamb, leavened bread, cheese made from goat's milk, onions and a jar of red wine of Engaddi. Shall I send up any of your men? There are several here sitting over their wine."

"See that they keep sober for a sharp gallop, and let them have their horses ready saddled. I want no one at present, till I have had some food; then there are two or three things I must talk over with you."

The host set the cold viands before his guest, and from a leathern bottle of goat's skin filled a jug of ample dimensions with the luscious dark-red vintage of Engaddi. The brigand chief made a hasty meal, then he tasted the wine, and found it too strong to be drunk freely. After one long draught, he put it aside: Now one feels oneself a man again, he said to himself. Old Zabulon may come up now.

He rapped on the table and the landlord quickly answered his summons. He told him of the conversation he had had with Gessius Florus, and ended by saying: "Do you know what was the impression he made on me? I believe he let me go in order that we might take up arms at once!"

Zabulon wagged his head from side to side and finally answered: "It is quite possible that the insurrection would come opportunely for him. Or he may have released you for the sake of causing dissension in our camp, for any child can foresee that those hypocritical Pharisees will never submit to have you for their leader. Or he may have done it in order to obtain your promise that he should take his departure without fear of your bandits. For the matter of that, it is a pity that you pledged yourself so solemnly not to molest him. He is certain to go to Caesarea tonight, how easy it would be to overtake him on the way! And I reckon he will take with him not less than fifty or sixty talents, not any less than that. If you had known that, I believe you would have made some other proposal to him. It might almost be said that the promise was not binding, since it was given under quite a false supposition."

"Do not tempt me with your fine-drawn sophistries, you old sinner. My deadliest enemy shall never say of me that I violated my oath. Robbery and murder are often honorable acts in these times and in these parts, they are only directed against one's fellow-men, but perjury is a sin against God Himself. So do not come near me with your arguments."

"Well, well, it is a pity though, all the same. Sixty talents! that would be nice addition for our military coffers, and being taken from the enemy, it would count

as double. We should be very glad of it, the more so since the expedition against the wealthy Rabbi Sadoc was unfortunately a failure.

"As for that, when we storm the citadel, I shall settle accounts with the Roman centurion, who interposed so inopportunately."

"What do you mean by settling accounts? You may revenge yourself, if you will, but that does not prevent the plan we arranged so astutely for getting the whole of the Rabbi's property, some hundred talents, into the hands of the confederates, having come to nothing. He fell into the trap readily when the prospect was held out to him of filling the High-Priest's office and thus acting over again the part of the Father of the Machabees. And if we had brought his daughter as an orphaned heiress to Jerusalem, her wealth, ostensibly the property of Ben Caiaphas and his son, would in reality have come to us. And now the daughter has disappeared — probably she has been told who were the real authors of the plot against her father, and will not be prevailed upon to give her hand to Eleazar."

Then Zabulon proceeded to tell the story of the abortive attempt on the part of Eleazar's and Sheik Marchoch's followers respectively, to possess themselves of the bride and her dowry, both of which had been carried off to the Governor.

"I heard the Procurator accused of that a few hours ago," Ben Gioras replied, "and could not make head or tail of the affair. So that is how matters stand! And instead of the bride they brought him an old maid-servant. But what has become of the damsel herself, and above all, what business had the Sheik to interfere in what did not concern him?"

"It is evident that he wanted Sadoc's daughter, who is said to be extremely beautiful, for himself; and the Centurion probably was of the same mind, for he has got her hidden somewhere — I shall very soon find out where."

"Well, that is something else to add to his score," Ben Gioras exclaimed. "And as sure as I am a son of Abraham, that saucy young jack-a-napes shall answer



to me for it. That fair daughter of our people shall never be his. What has become of the boy? Is he in Ben Caiaphas' hands?"

"Not yet. The Sheik is haggling about the amount of his ransom, from what I hear."

"The Sheik again! If I could dispense with the services of his band I would let him feel my dagger between his ribs! There is no confidence to be placed on these sons of Hagar. He must surrender the boy immediately, and he shall be handed over to Ben Caiaphas' care, who will be his guardian when the father dies. Thus we shall get the property into our power after all. One of my men must ride off instantly and tell the Sheik I order him to send the boy over here forthwith."

"Here, in my house—what a capital idea, you are a clever fellow, Ben Gioras! Ben Caiaphas may just as well give us a trifle, a talent, or perhaps two, for providing him with the key to such a fortune, it would only be fair. And as regards the treasures which the Procurator is carrying away to Caesarea, to the sore injury of our impoverished country, one might just give the Sheik a hint, that he might pursue after him with the horsemen, as Pharaoh pursued the children of Israel. Now do not interrupt me, I know you have a tender conscience. But I have taken no oath, and I will give the young man whom you are sending to the Sheik a written message for him; it is as well that he should know that the Roman is on his way to Caesarea with a pack of ill-gotten treasures. Perhaps the Lord might give him into his hand, and the Sheik would be generous enough to give me a trifle for my trouble in writing the letter."

Ben Gioras struck the table heavily with his fist, saying: "I forbid you to do that! I will not have the wretched Roman think I have played him false; and I will not have that deceitful Sheik, who wants to make a bargain with Rabbi Sadoc behind my back, enrich himself with Florus' stolen goods!"

"Now then, do not look so fierce, as if you would eat me up, because I wished to make the enemy of our country disgorge the pelf he has amassed by injustice.

You are our Captain, and if you do not choose that the Sheik should do it, he shall not. I will go and tell one of your men to go and fetch Sadoc's young son."

"Send him to me, I would rather give him my orders myself. And if you give him a letter without my knowledge, it will be all the worse for you, old man!"

The host left the room and called the messenger, who was known as Red Tubal. Of course he gave him a verbal message for the Sheik, adding the Captain did not wish a written message sent. So when Ben Gioras asked the man whether Zabulon had given him a letter for the Sheik he said no.

The messenger quitted the city by the Fountain gate, and rode on towards the desert through the live-long night. At the brook Cedron he met some men carrying a litter. Accustomed to make inquiries about everything, he asked the men whence they came, and soon learned that they were conveying none other than the wounded Rabbi in the litter to Jerusalem. The bearers, weary of his questions, would not tell him to what house they were taking the sick man. Tubal hesitated for a moment whether to follow them, but he decided to go on his way, reflecting that he had no orders to do otherwise, the Captain had bidden him make haste, and the sooner the news of the Roman Governor's journey to Caesarea reached the Sheik, so much the better. So he put spurs to his horse and trotted quietly along the moon-lit road. "Our Captain is a queer fellow," he said to himself, "he would not betray the Governor's movements to the Sheik. I dare say he would grudge him both the glory of the exploit and the spoil."

Early on the following morning Ben Gioras, accompanied by Zabulon and a few other leaders of the *Sicarii*, made their way unnoticed to Caiaphas' house. They were admitted at once by the porter and conducted to the cellar-like apartment on the ground-floor of the half-ruined wing, the hall in which the Chief Council had uttered Jesus' death-warrant. The dungeon where the maniac was confined was beneath the inhabited portion of the house.

Ananus Ben Caiaphas did not keep them waiting

long. With every demonstration of delight he hastened into the room, and cried: "What do I hear? Simon, beloved Simon, brother of my heart, you are given back to us! the mainstay of our confederation!" So saying he would have thrown his arms round Ben Gioras' neck and kissed him, but the bandit held him at arm's length, replying coldly: "Not so fast, Ben Caiaphas. You were not so very eager to ransom me. If the decision had rested with you, for all your professions of affection, I should now be hanging on the cross."

"Who has been slandering me so basely?" exclaimed Ananus with well-acted indignation. "How can you believe such a thing of me! Because I did not fall in with the first offer Florus made? Do be reasonable. I hoped for the sake of our coffers to get him to reduce his terms, which were unconscionably high, and besides my son was hoping to persuade the Chief Council to storm the palace, and set you free with a sword, not a purse in his hand."

"You are never at a loss for excuses," Ben Gioras replied. "But we will put private matters aside. What measures are to be taken when the Procurator has departed, and left only a handful of soldiers behind?"

"We must take up arms. The cowards, who are concerned about their money-bags, and the more wealthy of the citizens in general, want peace at any price. Their leaders must be sacrificed to the public weal. My father once said it was expedient that one man should die, and not the whole nation perish, and I say: It is expedient that a hundred should die! Here is a list of the names of those members of the Council who are for peace unconditionally. They must be removed or we shall never attain our end."

"Let me see them," said Ben Gioras. "The High-Priest comes first—well, he deserves to die—then comes Ezechias—why he is your relative who wooed Sadoc's daughter for your son! I must say gratitude is not your distinguishing characteristic!"

"The good of my people is my guiding star, and I would even sacrifice my son, if it was necessary for Israel's freedom and the law of Moses required it.

Thank Heaven, Eleazar is eager to fight the battle of the Lord, though I thought it better not to admit him to our consultations."

"You did right there. I confess I would rather use my sword than deal, like you, in these secret underhanded ways. Your son is to be envied. But who is to be High-Priest if Ezechias who stands next in succession, is on the list of the proscribed?"

"We promised the office to Sadoc," Ananus answered. "But since he is either dead or severely wounded, we must prospectively in the sorrowful event of his decease, choose a man from amongst ourselves, one whom we can thoroughly trust to fill the post."

"Perhaps you are thinking of yourself," suggested Ben Gioras. "Well, if I did, what objection have you to make? I have the best claim to the post which my father filled so ably."

"I have nothing against it," Ben Gioras replied, shrugging his shoulders. "It matters little to me who borrows the breastplate with the names of the twelve tribes from Agrippa on high festivals. But how you could dare to go into the Holy of Holies without fearing lest the fate of Core and Dathan overtake you passes my comprehension." This latter half of his speech the brigand did not utter aloud.

"Very good," Zabulon said. "Ben Caiaphas shall be High-Priest. But we shall expect him to pay us a good round sum for this job. We will settle how much presently. When Ezechias is dead, he will be the guardian, perhaps the heir of Rabbi Sadoc's children, and can dispose of all the large fortune as he pleases."

The others were agreed, and the remainder of the names were read out. Only one was struck off the list, that of Joseph Ben Matthias. It was hoped to gain him to their side by the offer of a post of command, for he was known to think much of himself. Besides he had made an enemy of the Procurator by the accusations he had brought against him, and was popular in the city.

After everything had been discussed and considered, the conspirators separated, hoping to succeed in stirring up the people to revolt before the pilgrims had dis-

persed. And if the moderate party attempted to restore tranquillity, they must pay for their interference with their lives.

Early the next morning the High-Priest heard of the departure of the Governor, and the withdrawal of the greater part of the troops. He hastily summoned a meeting of the chiefs of the moderate party in his house. All were unanimously agreed that the threatened rising must be prevented. Matthias Ben Matthias, brother to Joseph, who was detained as a hostage in the palace, said they must apparently yield to the will of the excited mob, and advised delay. To gain time would in itself be a great gain. When once those who had come up to the Feast had left the town, the citizens, who now were emboldened by feeling themselves so greatly in the majority, would easily be brought to their senses, the ring-leaders could then be arrested, first and foremost Eleazar and his father, who were in league with Ben Gioras and his bandits, and appeared to be at the head of a formidable conspiracy. Meanwhile the Governor would probably be persuaded to adopt milder measures, he must see that he could not irritate the people any more with impunity. King Agrippa might be asked to write to Florus and to the Legate with that intention.

On the last point there was a difference of opinion, and it was ultimately given up, for both Pharisees and Saducees detested the house of Herod. Nor was anything decided as to arresting Eleazar and his father. The other suggestions were adopted, and a goodly number of emissaries mixed with the people that day, artfully insinuating that it was not yet time to revolt against the Roman authority. The people must be armed; if the whole country rose as one man, with the Syrians and Mesopotamians as allies, success might confidently be anticipated. Let the pilgrims return home quietly and there await the signal which the High-Priest and the Council, but no others, would give at the opportune time.

Meanwhile the hasty departure, not to say the flight of the Legate and the Procurator had become generally known, and all the town was in a ferment. The narrow streets were crowded with masses of the people.

"We thoroughly frightened them yesterday when such a lot of us shouted outside the palace gates," remarked one of the citizens.

"I believe we did. And it would have been better if we had attacked them then and there, and driven them out with stones and cudgels, as soon as the High-Priest and the other members of the Council had withdrawn," another said.

"True enough. Then they would not have escaped with their plunder. They tell me there were a hundred camels, heavily laden, carrying chests of gold and all manner of treasures which they took away," a third interposed.

"That is all very well, but then it would have been tantamount to putting the good Rabbi Joseph Ben Matthias to the sword. He delivered on the whole a very good address in Greek—I know what I am saying, for my nephew goes to him to the temple for instruction. And not only would it have cost the poor man his life, but it was to a certain extent the Sabbath, and a combat would have been contrary to both law and custom. That is my opinion, and Rabbi Gamaliel is of the same mind. And today, the 16th Nisan, when the first fruits of the corn are offered in the temple, all servile work and deeds of violence are strictly forbidden. I think we should do better if we were to go up to the temple and see the Priests' festive dances, than stand about here in the streets talking about war. Lord, chastise us not according to our iniquities." Thereupon the Pharisee drew forth his phylacteries, half-closed his eyes, and began to say his prayers while still in the thick of the crowd, wending his way at the same time towards the temple.

"It is a pity," another said, "that the rest of the Sabbath extends to the festival today. Otherwise we could have pursued them, for with a thousand beasts of burden, (for there were thousands, not hundreds of them, as my cousin who lives at the gate of the Women told me,) with such a cavalcade, I say, they could not go on very quickly. We could still overtake them and attack them in the narrow passes behind Bethania."

"Oh, as for that, leave the job to Sheik Mardoeh

and his Bedouins. If he gets wind of the Governor's journey he will fall upon him like a thunderstorm."

"Have you heard that Ben Gioras is at liberty again?" asked a Jew who had just joined the group.

"Ben Gioras at liberty!" they all ejaculated in astonishment. "He is an arch-robber and has deserved to be crucified a hundred times. But we want him and his followers if there is really going to be a revolt. They say, he has ten thousand desperadoes at his command."

"More than that, you may rely upon it. Almost all the 18,000 workmen whom Agrippa dismissed last year joined him. And Sheik Mardoch's horsemen may be reckoned by thousands," said a pilgrim from Jericho.

"The Romans will have a fine business if they really venture to send us another Governor. We will close the gates of Jerusalem in his face, and fight against his troops like one man," said another of the citizens.

"And come they will. They will not give up this country, which they have squeezed like a lemon for nearly a whole century, without a struggle. We shall have to fight for law and liberty as the Machabees did. But we must all join together, all the sons of Jacob, and the God of our fathers will give us His aid!"

The last words were uttered by Eleazar, who was passing by apparently accidentally, and they were received enthusiastically. "All hail to our leader, the modern Judas Machabeus!" resounded on all sides, and every eye was turned to the Captain of the Templeguard, as he stood there in his glittering armour, like Saul a head and shoulders higher than the crowd, in reality the image of a hero of bygone days. He spoke again.

"The coat of mail which I wear did, it is true belong to Judas Machabeus. May his spirit, his courage animate me and you all! Brethren, choose from among those who have come up for the Feast men who will defend the law and the temple. We have plenty of arms, and soon shall have a further supply. Do not let yourselves be deluded by the wiseacres, who, concerned for the safety of their pelf, cry Peace, Peace! There can be no peace between the Lord God of Hosts and the false gods of the Romans. Nor can there be peace between

His children and these uncircumcised dogs, whom may the Lord in His wrath consume like stubble before the fire."

Again shouts of applause were heard, but Eleazar checked them. "Do not talk, but act," he said. "Now go up to the temple and offer to God the first sheaf of corn. And when the Feast is over, sharpen your swords, buckle on your armour, fill your quiver with arrows. And he who is too poor to provide himself with weapons, may come up to me, in Caiaphas' house—all Israel knows where that is."

Followed by noisy cries, Eleazar walked slowly up to the temple, carrying his head very high.

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## CHAPTER 18.

### **Thamar's Flight.**

In Herod's palace the outbreak of the insurrection was hourly expected, and it was debated whether it would not be advisable to withdraw the sentinels on guard at the city-gates for the defence of the Antonia fortress and the palace. But this measure was too palpable a confession of weakness to be tolerated by Roman valour. "If they attack us in earnest, we have no chance," said Lysias the tribune; "and in that case it matters not whether we die a brave soldier's death defending the gates, or on the walls of the fortress."

"I do not think that it will come to that, although your Procurator evidently challenges attack by his sudden departure. The party who really wishes for peace, is too strong at present," replied Joseph the scribe, whom the tribune treated with all consideration.

"I should like to confer with king Agrippa so as to be prepared whatever happens," Lysias said. "Perhaps he would send us a few auxiliaries, before Gallus could come up with his legions, in case that is, the Jews actually revolt. Of course there is no doubt that Rome will eventually re-conquer the city and avenge our blood, but how many lives would a siege cost! We might avert that if we could but succeed in holding the palace and the Antonia for a few weeks or months, until the Syrian legion, and one from Egypt comes to reinforce us. Should you have the courage, Lucius, to go as soon as it is dark — of course in disguise — to Berenice's house, you know where it is. I think it would be wiser to get her to speak for us, than to go direct to Agrippa. To tell the truth, she is far braver than her brother."

The Centurion was quite ready to undertake the mission. Under cover of darkness he slipped out of a postern gate into the town, muffled in the wide cloak worn by pilgrims from Arabia. There were many people

coming and going in the streets, and although Lucius did not understand much of the vernacular, he knew enough to gather that the question whether or no the Romans should be attacked, was being hotly discussed. When he reached Berenice's palace he breathed freely, for valiant as he was in battle, the idea of being recognized as a Roman soldier and cut to pieces by the mob was by no means pleasant.

He found the entrance to the palace strictly guarded, for the popular feeling was almost as inimical to the Herodians as to the Romans. Consequently when a stranger whose dress was that of an Arab approached the gate, the sentries pointed their lances at him. On his nationality being disclosed, he was at once admitted, but the crowd collected in front of the palace cried: "Treason! a Roman disguised as an Arab has been let into the palace of the Herodians! What can his business be?" And the throng round the palace gates increased every minute.

When Lucius stepped in the brilliantly lighted *atrium* Eupolemos the major-domo met him in some alarm, asking, in the name of the gods, why he was setting the people on them. But when he recognized the Centurion his tone changed, though he thought it necessary to devise some means of pacifying the mob. So calling one of the servants he bade him put the Arab cloak round him and go and tell the people he had brought a letter from the High-Priest, and when tranquillity was restored, slip in by the back door. "What troublous times are these!" he continued, addressing the Centurion. "Shall I take your name to the Queen, or her princely sister, or to the fair fugitive whom you brought hither yesterday? What a beautiful creature she is! She deserves to be a Greek or a Roman, for certainly the Graces presided at her birth."

"Have the goodness to announce me to the Queen," Lucius replied.

"I will do so directly. And is not the lovely Jewess so much as to know that her gallant rescuer is in the house?" Eupolemos inquired, with a sly look at the Centurion.

"Her bereavement is so recent that I will not venture to intrude upon her at present," the soldier rejoined.

"How very considerate! Well, that was the message she sent down this afternoon to the Captain of the Templeguard, who came and almost insisted on seeing her."

Lucius had no idea that Thamar's hand had been promised to Eleazar by her father. She only told him that she was apprehensive of forcible abduction on the part of the Governor. He could not conceive what in the world the Captain could want with the daughter of the late Rabbi. Eupolemos went on to say that the young man affirmed positively that he was the affianced to the beautiful maiden, threatening to take her away by force, alleging that it was against his will that she was detained here.

"What did she say to that?" Lucius inquired.

"She would not hear a word of the betrothal, and made me give the man a written declaration in which she asserted that she came here and remained here of her own free will. Thereupon this Jewish Mars thought fit to take himself off, looking black as thunder and threatening to come again. I am afraid he will make great disagreeables for us. But it is high time that I showed you in, for the Queen's favorite maid has seen you."

A few minutes later Lucius found himself in Berenice's presence. She received him in a state apartment, lighted by a magnificent chandelier. He wondered at the perfect serenity the royal lady displayed despite the disturbed state of the city. She was very gracious, and listened attentively while he expounded Lysias' projects, and begged her to mediate with her brother on his behalf.

"We have invariably sided with Rome, although Rome has not always rewarded our fidelity as it deserved to be rewarded," she said. "After the death of my father Agrippa, my brother, instead of being permitted to assume the hereditary crown of Judea, was put off with the insignificant kingdom of Chalcis. And it would assuredly have been better for Rome, as well as for my own nation, had Agrippa ascended the throne of his fathers, instead of Judea becoming the prey of this Roman Pro-

curator's shameless greed! Pardon my plain speaking; knowing you I see that all Romans are not like these governors who treat our royal race with scorn and drive the Jewish nation to desperation. Yet we shall continue to hold with Rome, if only because war must infallibly end with the destruction of this city, and of the temple built by my ancestor and only completed last year by my brother. I will speak to Agrippa tomorrow; I feel sure he could soon collect a body of mercenaries from the towers and the shores of the Dead Sea, so that you might have some succour, awaiting Gallus' arrival. But I hope the people will keep quiet, provided Florus does not irritate them by fresh enormities."

Thus spoke Berenice, toying meanwhile with her golden armlets. When the Centurion expressed his thanks and prepared to depart, she dropped her cold, distant manner, and began to talk about Thamar, whose beauty and whose misfortune must touch every heart. She told him how the orphaned maiden had made every effort to give her father a fitting burial. But the slaves whom Eupolemos had sent to Bethania to make inquiries, had returned with the tidings that the Rabbi was already interred and the house was left empty. The unhappy girl was overwhelmed with grief, and it was with difficulty that she was prevented from going herself to Bethania, to visit the grave and render due honours to the departed. Of course in these troublous days she could not have been allowed to go, the more so as a new danger threatened her, an enemy laying in wait to entrap the heiress, as she appeared to be, to a large fortune. Eleazar, the scion of a house once honorable but now greatly reduced and burdened with debt, had thrust himself into the house and claimed the damsel as his bride. She believed some such alliance had actually been arranged by the father, but the girl herself would not hear of it. She was not sure whether under the Jewish law she might not be compelled to consent. Moreover the young man had threatened to take her away by force.

"As he is the Captain of the Templeguard, he may succeed in doing so," Berenice continued. "Conse-

quently we have decided to remove the maiden this very evening to the fortress Masada on the west shore of the Dead Sea. My sister Drusilla will accompany her with some trustworthy slaves. Sister has taken a wonderful fancy to Thamar. It is better for her too that she should be out of the town just now, when a storm threatens to burst over it. For my part I enjoy a little excitement, I am not naturally timid. They can remain at Masada till the times are quieter. Meanwhile I shall direct my steward at Antioch to make inquiries about Thamar's connections, and see that her fortune is not lost to her. It appears she has no relatives there, and those she has here are wretchedly poor and grasping. Until her marriage the young girl's property can be placed under the care of Cestius Gallus, who seems to have some idea of honour and justice. And I hope she will soon be married for to my knowledge a suitor has come forward, a fine, handsome young man, equally noble and brave, and to him Cestius would gladly give the charming bride and her large inheritance, for that fortunate suitor is a Roman."

The last words were uttered with a meaning look. The colour mounted to the Centurion's cheek, as he disavowed any intention of acting the part of suitor himself. Thereupon the Princess touched him lightly on the arm with a short ivory stick, the iron point of which was an object of dread to her slaves, saying: "Do not try to deceive me! I should not be a woman if I had not read your heart and Thamar's at the first glance. Will you escort my sister to Masada? I will ask Lysias to give you leave."

"You are most kind, my Queen," Lucius answered. "But when danger seems so imminent, I should not like to abandon my comrades."

Berenice expected this answer, or she would not have made the proposal. In fact it was not without a lurking feeling of jealousy that she had perceived that the Rabbi's daughter held a higher place in the young officer's affection than herself, and the design of separating them had weighed with her in planning to send the girl to a distance. "I quite understand and approve

your feeling," she replied. "But you will conduct the litters as far as the city gate, and see that your guards let them out immediately."

To this the Centurion gladly agreed. Almost directly Drusilla entered with Thamar to take leave of Berenice before starting on the journey.

Lucius found an opportunity to speak to Thamar apart for a moment. He looked with heartfelt compassion at the girl, whose sweetness and modesty had awakened within him feelings he had never experienced before. He would fain have said a word of sympathy, of solace to her, but in his embarrassment he could only murmur: "Poor child! may your God give you consolation!"

Thamar was fully aware of the nature of the young man's feelings for her, and the promptings of her heart almost overcame the warnings of conscience. But she remembered the strict prohibition of the God-fearing Esdras in regard to an alliance between a daughter of Israel and one of the heathen. So she gave him her hand, and said, in as calm a tone as she could command: "Farewell! May the God of my fathers, the one true God, be with you and grant you all the happiness you so richly deserve. Farewell, I shall think of you daily in my prayers."

"I hope we shall meet again, under happier circumstances. I shall always remember you, my sweet child, and as soon as possible I shall try to discover your father's grave, and offer milk and flowers to his manes."

"No, you must not make those offerings, our creed forbids them," Thamar rejoined, smiling amid her tears. "But lay a wreath on it in my name and your own. And please take this ring, the stone is a valuable one. If I do not return within a year, sell it and put up a monument to my father with the proceeds; if I am unable to see to this myself, it will be a comfort to think that you will do so; the ring belonged to my mother. Once more farewell. May God and the holy Angels protect you!"

The two royal ladies came up at this moment, and with the usual good wishes the parting took place.

Midnight was past, and the streets were comparatively quiet and empty, so at least Eupolemos assured the travellers. They left the palace by a side door, opening into a lonely street, and were accompanied by a few men-at-arms, at whose head Lucius placed himself. Once outside the gate a dozen horsemen were to form their escort.

The moon, now almost full, stood high in the heavens and cast a dazzling light in the narrow street, making the small strip of shadow under the houses on one side all the darker by contrast. A solitary figure emerged from one of these houses, and followed the cavalcade at a short distance, as it wended its way in silence towards the Ephraim Gate. One of the slaves drew the Centurion's attention to the man, but he thought it was probably only one of the inhabitants who chanced to be going the same way. The gate was soon reached, and immediately opened to afford egress to the litters. Lucius stepped up quickly and gave his hand to Thamar as a final farewell.

As he did so, he observed that the man, who till then had kept at a certain distance, came up close behind him, and stared into the litter. Lucius turned angrily and laid a firm grip on the fellow's shoulder. The Jew stammered some excuse, but the Centurion said: "I know you to be a spy, sent by the Captain of the Templeguard. You may tell your master from me that the bride has started safely on her journey. But lest he should hear this too soon, you will remain in the guard-room for the next twenty-four hours. Keep quiet, my friend, or we shall have to shut you up more closely than will be agreeable to you."

Lucius handed the man over to the care of the decurion, who had by that time closed the gates. The next time the patrol came around he ventured to the palace, and reported the result of his mission to Claudius Lysias.

It was now the morning of the second day since the Rabbi's removal to the house of the Deacon in Jerusalem. He had passed a tolerably good night. The inflammation which had given Nicanor considerable anxiety, was much less, and the swelling of the tongue had gone down

to such an extent, that he was able to articulate more distinctly, though only a few words at a time. Nicanor thought it best to explain the state of affairs to him as much as possible, for the sake of setting his mind at rest.

Therefore, as soon as he had dressed the wound with his accustomed skill and care, observing that the Rabbi cast his eyes round the small and cheerful chamber as if to inquire where he was, he said to him: "You are with friends; and if you will promise to spare your poor tongue, I will tell you all you want to know. If you talk, you will prevent the wound from closing. It is unnecessary for you to ask questions, I know quite well what you would inquire. So as long as you are silent, I will talk, but if you begin to speak, I shall be silent. Do you agree to that?"

The Rabbi nodded in assent. The physician's quiet, gentle voice soothed his nerves. He fixed his eyes on his countenance to catch every word. To his surprise Nicanor went into an adjoining room first of all, and came back with the familiar leather-bags containing the money and the jewels.

"To prove to you that you are with honest folk, who only are concerned for your good!" Nicanor said as he set them down. "There is your property just as you gave it in Bethania into your host's care. Please examine the seals, to convince yourself that they have not been tampered with."

The Rabbi's face brightened and he held out a trembling hand to the Deacon in token of thanks. Nicanor had evidently found the way to win his confidence. Now, placing himself beside the bed, he narrated as briefly as possible all that had happened since the Rabbi's party were attacked on the way from Jericho, adding: "It is more than probable that the brigands were in league with some treacherous friends of yours, who, lusting after your gold, enticed you to come to Jerusalem by false representations. That is why Eusebius would not surrender the bags to the person you mentioned, until you were able to test his trustworthiness. Ben Caiaphas wanted to carry off your daughter by force, but he left you lying there sorely wounded without attempting to do anything for you."



Here Nicanor paused, for the Rabbi could not contain his indignation. "What has become of my son? and my daughter?" he inquired.

"That is against our agreement," Nicanor said, putting up his hand to enforce silence. "You must not ask questions. The boy is still in the robber's camp. The wife of your entertainer at Bethania was carried off there too. I am sure you will be willing to pay the ransom they demand for her out of your ample funds, when I tell you that it was only on account of you that she was taken prisoner, because her husband refused to deliver those two bags up to the robbers."

The Rabbi asked for the tablets and wrote: "As large a sum as can be raised for the captives. Where is Thamar?"

"Your daughter, happily for her, has escaped the clutches both of Ben Caiphas and the Procurator, for the latter tried to gain possession of her. Unfortunately he did succeed in seizing the two camels laden with your goods. I think I have a clue to the whereabouts of the damsel. Do not worry yourself about her, the God of her fathers will give her back to you; His holy Angels will protect her."

Nothing was said for a few moments. Then the Rabbi asked in writing whether Nicanor was sure that she had not been carried off by the Roman officer who rescued them from the brigands?

"No, she has not been carried off. She is not with him," the deacon answered in a positive manner. "But this is enough for today. When I have learnt more and you are stronger, you shall hear everything. Now farewell for the present, remember the quieter you keep the more quickly will you recover. Eusebius will take charge of you for the next day or two; I have to go on a short journey. Peace be with you!"

The Rabbi expressed his gratitude to the best of his power, and begged Nicanor to take away the two precious bags and store them in a safe place. When he was gone, Sadoc had time to think over what he had just heard. He looked round the little chamber, now brightened by the sunshine, which, its light subdued by

a green curtain, fell on the straw mats covering the tiled floor. There was no trace of wealth, much less of luxury about it, but everything was scrupulously clean and orderly.

"I must be among Essenes or Therapeutists," the Rabbi said to himself. "Well, whatever their creed may be, they seem to be very kind people."

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## CHAPTER 19.

### Benjamin's Trials.

If we return to the lone ilex, we shall find Benjamin sitting there with Salome at the entrance of the cavern. The good woman had told him everything she could think of to comfort him, assuring him that his father was on the highroad to recovery, and that Thamar had happily escaped from the soldiers and the brigands by hiding herself.

"So they took away our old nurse Sara!" said the boy, laughing merrily in spite of his fears. "I should like to see how that wicked Eleazar will look when he sees her wrinkled old face instead of Thamar's fair countenance. But I hope he will not treat her cruelly?"

"I daresay the poor thing will be thoroughly frightened. But I should think they would let her go in a few hours' time," Salome said, and her answer contented the boy.

They sat for some time looking out over the barren, rocky wilderness where long stretches of sand and bare boulders glowed in the heat of the midday sun. In the far distance the grey surface of the Dead Sea was discernible. In the ravines the eye rested here and there on a green tamarisk or dark cypress, and from a crevice in the side of the rock hard by hung the scarlet blossom of a cactus, round which some bees were humming. Otherwise there was not a sign of life far and wide.

"It is a pity, Salome," the boy presently began in a low voice, "that you cannot walk far and are such a bad hand at climbing. Look, the Bedouin at the top of the rock up there, who ought to be watching us, is fast asleep. I have had my eye on him for some time; first he nodded, now he is fairly snoring. It would not be very difficult to climb down there. And if I were once at the bottom, I should run straight towards the west, until I got to Bethania, or at least found someone who would tell me the way to Eusebius' house in

Bethania. Then I should go to my father and say, as soon as he was well, we would just go and have a look at the temple in the Holy city, and then go back as fast as we could to Antioch. First we must have that wicked man punished who betrayed us into the robber's hands. I would myself go before the Judge, and say how I heard of his treachery from the robbers themselves. I suppose you would be afraid to climb down there?"

"For goodness sake, child! The precipice is at least a hundred and fifty feet deep. We should both break our necks."

"Oh no, we should not. Not if we trusted in the holy Angels. In that beautiful psalm of David's which I say at my night prayers, it says expressly that God has given them charge over us, to bear us up in their hands lest we dash our foot against a stone, not to speak of breaking our necks. Let us say the psalm and then make the venture."

Salome tried to make the child understand that this interpretation only applied to dangers to which we did not voluntarily expose ourselves, but he persisted that as that was the only way of escape open to them, they were justified in taking it. Who knows whether the head-strong youngster might not have made the rash attempt, had not a diversion occurred at that juncture.

A shrill whistle was heard in the distance, answered in various directions, and the watchman on the cliff woke up. Shortly after Benjamin was taken before the Sheik, and given in charge to Tubal the red-bearded, who had arrived bearing Ben Gioras' orders that the boy was to be taken to Jerusalem. The Sheik complied with this behest most reluctantly, but the ransom he had hoped to obtain was not worth a quarrel with the all-potent Captain, who was now at liberty again. Besides the expedition against Gessius Florus seemed to offer ample compensation. So he told Benjamin his wish was to be fulfilled: he was to go to Jerusalem on the morrow with the Redbeard.

"To my father and sister!" Benjamin cried in delight.

"That we shall see," the Sheik answered. "Now mind, you will always find welcome and protection in

my tents, in case you do not like being at home with your father or in your brother-in-law's house. You will have a sword and a horse, a tent and the wide world for your portion, whenever you come to me. Perhaps in after years you may have a fancy for this sort of life."

Benjamin begged hard that Salome might go with him, but the Sheik said he had more important matters to think about than an old woman. Beacon-fires were lighted to summon the troops from all sides, and before sunset the Sheik at the head of several hundred horsemen set out in a north-westerly direction. But he came too late. The cohorts had already passed through the mountain-gorges when he overtook their rear-guard, and he could not venture to attack the well-disciplined ranks of the Romans in the plains almost beneath the walls of Caesarea. He was very much enraged with Ben Gioras for not letting him know about the matter sooner. Had he had any suspicion that the Chief wished to conceal it from him altogether, he would have broken off with him entirely.

The next morning Benjamin was up betimes and in high spirits. Salome felt sure that he would not be taken to Bethania, but put into the hands of Ben Caiaphas. She said nothing however to interfere with his happiness, only bade him repeat his psalm about the Angels, and in bidding him farewell, made the sign of the cross on his forehead.

"Why are you scratching my face with your thumb?" the boy inquired, for he was ignorant of the sign of the cross.

"It is a token of blessing," Salome replied, "and I pray that you may one day know its virtue and grace. Now goodbye and the peace of the Lord be with you!"

The evening was far advanced when Tubal the red-bearded reached the crest of the Mount of Olives, and in the fast fading twilight Benjamin caught the first glimpse of the towering walls and roofs of the temple, still tinged with rosy light while the valley below was wrapt in darkness. "There is the temple, the temple of Almighty God!" the boy exclaimed enthusiastically, stretching out his arms towards the lofty structure,

whilst the verse of a psalm which he had often heard Thamar sing to the accompaniment of her harp, rose to his lips: How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of my God!

"You make my horse restive with your stupid noise" the brigand said crossly.

Then it occurred to Benjamin that from Salome's description of the way, they ought to have got to Bethania before Jerusalem came in sight. He questioned his companion about this, and said he must take him to Eusebius' house in Bethania. But the man answered gruffly that the boy's father was in Jerusalem; only the day before yesterday he had met the litter in which he was being conveyed to the city. So the boy relapsed into silence, and about an hour later, when it was quite dark, they stopped at Zabulon's door.

Benjamin was frightened at the sight of the old blear-eyed landlord and would have run out again into the street, if Zabulon had not laid a firm grip on his arm, saying: "Now, now, young man where are you off to? I will take you to your good cousin, when you have eaten the nice things I will give you, all sorts of dainties, cakes and honey, raisins and fresh figs."

Benjamin stoutly declared that he did not want to go to his cousin, but to his father, and he wished for none of the old man's dainties. When however, Zabulon put him into a inner room and promising to take him very soon to his father, set some of the good things he spoke of on the table, the child's hunger prevailed over his aversion to the host, and he ate at first a little and then very freely of the provisions before him, till his appetite being satisfied he thought of poor Salome who had such miserable fare in the robber's den, and wished he could send her what was left. Then he bethought him that he had forgotten all about his father, and calling Zabulon, told him he must take him to his father at once.

The old man lingered intentionally until, overcome by fatigue, the child fell into a sound sleep. "Well, well," he said to himself, "the morrow will be plenty soon enough. I am not going to take the lad to Ben Caiaphas

this dark night, besides I have not got a written promise of the talent that I was to have." Thereupon he laid the boy on a sheepskin, and he slept far into the morning.

When he woke up, Benjamin heard voices in the next room, and recognizing that of the landlord, he called to him, reminding him of his promise to take him to his father. Zabulon replied that the man who was to take him to his father was there, only waiting to put his signature to a paper, and would be ready by the time Benjamin had washed and said his morning prayers. The boy did as he was told, and meanwhile the two men, who were disputing, seemed to have made up their difference. Zabulon unlocked the door and brought out the boy, giving him over to the charge of a man, the shifty look of whose eyes prejudiced the child against him at once.

"There, friend," the landlord said, "I give the golden key into your safe-keeping. Mind you take good care of him, and make use of him for the benefit of the league. You know Ben Gioras will not be joked with." Then turning to the boy he added: "That is the man who will take you to your father."

Benjamin hung back, evidently mistrusting the stranger whose appearance by no means inspired confidence. Zabulon perceiving this, told the child he had better go with the man without making any objection, for he knew well how to make naughty boys do as he bade them.

There was no alternative therefore but to go with him. Benjamin followed his guide through a labyrinth of streets and alleys, until they came to the market-place, and after crossing it, stopped at the door of a courtyard. On his companion opening it, the boy asked if he should find his father there, and on being answered in the affirmative, he entered quite willingly. No sooner however had the door closed behind him, than the man changed his tone.

"I am your cousin and guardian, Anannus Ben Caia-phas," he began. "If you will show me due regard and obedience, you shall fare very well here, but if you are obstinate and dare to defy me, you shall find out I have

means and ways to break your stubborn will." And the man rolled his eyes and looked at the child in such a way that the poor little fellow was terrified. However he mustered up courage to answer: "You promised that you would take me to my father. If he tells me I am to obey you, I will, for I always do what he tells me, though he never looked so angrily at me as you do."

"You will never see your father again, he is dead and buried, and I am your legal guardian," Ben Caiaphas replied.

"I do not believe you! You told a lie, when you said my father was here, and I shall believe nothing else that you say," rejoined Benjamin, his indignation getting the better of his fears.

"You insolent rascal!" exclaimed Ben Caiaphas, beginning to flog the boy. Benjamin was not accustomed to such treatment; he could not help crying, but he would not beg for mercy. On the contrary when Ben Caiaphas stopped and asked if he would obey him, the boy told him how he had heard the brigands say they had attacked his father on his instigation, and he would accuse him of this before the Judge.

Ben Caiaphas turned white to the lips with rage and alarm. He seized the boy as if he would throttle him, and indeed he would probably have done so, had it not been for his own interest to spare his life.

"Come," he said, "I will take you to my father; you may keep him company until you beg my pardon on your knees."

So saying he took the boy through several passages to the steps leading down to the basement. On the way they met Nathaniel, who, astonished to see his father with a pretty little boy whom he did not know, slipped aside out of the way before either of them noticed him.

"I never saw father in such a rage before, except when Giezi let grandfather escape from prison," Nathaniel said to himself. "What can he be going to do with that pretty boy? Perhaps he got into the house to steal something. See, father has lighted a lantern and is going down the steps to the dungeons; I will creep down after them."



Ben Caiaphas conducted Benjamin through a damp, vaulted passage to a low door plated with iron. He drew back the bolts, and as he did so, the boy's blood ran cold with horror at the cries that issued from the dungeon. On the door being opened, the light fell upon an aged man, crouching on the ground, staring at the new-comers with eyes that almost started from their sockets, and stretching out his arms as if to deter them from entering.

"Is he coming, is he coming at last on the clouds of heaven, and must I appear before him, as he once did before me?" the prisoner exclaimed in hollow tones.

"You are a coward, a poltroon! Why should you be afraid of the crucified? If he had the power, he would have destroyed you and all of us long ago," the son said in a harsh voice to his father. "Did we not stone and behead his friends and disciples, and hunt them out of Jerusalem? If he had been the Messiah, he would neither have let himself be crucified, nor let any harm happen to his followers."

The old man drew his ragged garment closer around him with a trembling hand, murmuring something unintelligible in his long unkempt beard. Then all of a sudden he began to whimper, and to cry as if in pain: "Woe, woe unto us! He will come on the clouds and I shall be damned. I am already damned; a fire burns in my breast, in my brain, a fire that will never be quenched. They are waiting for me in hell; every night they cower around me.—There do you not see them, the spirits of darkness? They grin at me and gnash their teeth and say: Soon, soon will He come in the clouds with great power and majesty, to judge thee and us," and the unhappy maniac shook his emaciated fists at the demons whom he fancied he saw, so that the chains on his wrists clattered.

Benjamin looked at the old man with eyes full of horror and apprehension, and whispered: "He is possessed by an evil spirit. You are not going to shut me up with him? I would rather you killed me."

"I am going to leave you here awhile to think over your insults and your threats, and make up your mind

to ask my pardon and promise to hold your tongue. Do not go too near the old fellow. He might strangle you, if he took it into his head. His chain is only half the length of the prison." So saying Ananus thrust the boy from him, and closed the door, despite his cries and entreaties to be released.

When Benjamin found that all his prayers were unavailing, he sat down in a corner, the farthest from the maniac, and commended himself to his good Angel. He had learnt from Thamar a great reverence for the holy Angels, and unbounded confidence in their protecting care. He recalled to mind all the encouraging stories in the Scriptures, how the Angel of the Lord was with the three children in the fiery furnace, preserving them from the raging flames, and how he closed the jaws of the lions in the dreadful den, and the thought of this inspired him with courage and with trust.

The prison was not quite dark. A few rays of light were admitted by a small round window high up in the wall. The madman was more calm now, and Benjamin grew more accustomed to his presence. In fact he tried to comfort him, and his kindly voice appeared to soothe the old man. He forgot his fears, and remembered that he had been the High-Priest.

Presently he said: "It is well that you are here, my tormentors have vanished. The Lord has, it is true, cast me off as He did Heli, and He may have called you, as He did Samuel. I am still the High-priest, and you shall fetch my ephod and breastplate, that I may offer the sacrifice, as I did then,—when He was hanging on the cross, and the foundations of the temple were shaken, the veil was rent from top to bottom. Oh how terrified I was! But I mastered my fears, whereas the other priests ran shrieking out of the temple. Mind, Samuel, if you ever are made High-Priest in my place, beware of the Nazarite. He was the bane of my life. But I will not bow down to him. We want no such Messiah as him, a carpenter's son. Away with him! He has blasphemed God! Crucify him! His blood be on us and our children! — It has come, it will come on us. It burns me like a fire, it will burn my son, it will burn

up our nation, our city, our temple! I see the flames flaring up to the heavens. And on the clouds he will come to judge the living and the dead."

Then despair again seized on Caiaphas and he whimpered so pitifully that Benjamin was cut to the heart. He attempted to comfort him, reminding him of God's mercy. But the old man shrieked: "I do not want His mercy! He would have forgiven me gladly; I read it in His eyes. But I had rather He had cursed me. It riled me to hear Him say, when He was on the cross: 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!' I knew well enough what I was doing; if the signs and wonders He performed had not been enough, the gentle look in His eye would have convinced me that He came from God. Look you, we confined Him here in this dungeon, after He had been declared guilty of death, the night before His crucifixion. My soldiers, cowardly eyeservants that they were, mocked Him and set Him at naught and buffeted and spat upon Him. I looked on with a scornful smile when they blindfolded Him; there to that pillar where you are standing, they bound Him. Once I caught His eye, so gentle, so ready to forgive; I slunk away, I want no compassion from Him."

From the wild ravings of the maniac Benjamin gathered that he was alluding to the Nazarite, Jesus, whom he had heard his father denounce bitterly as an arrant deceiver. He told this to Caiaphas, adding that they did quite right in crucifying him. But the old man laughed scoffingly, and said; "He was no deceiver! He was truth itself. We could substantiate no charge against Him. And—I will whisper something to you, it is a secret, you must never betray it—He really rose again from the dead, though His heart was pierced with a lance. We hushed it up; we gave money to the soldiers that they might spread the report that His disciples had stolen the body away while they were asleep. It was a lie, but all the world believes a lie rather than the truth. It is we who are the deceivers. But tell no one what I have said, for never will I recognize such an one as He for the Messiah."

Then the unhappy madman suddenly uttered a cry of

rage and fear, so that Benjamin withdrew trembling to the farthest end of the cell, and held his ears that he might not hear the terrible words: "I am damned, I shall be damned to all eternity."

Presently Caiaphas grew calm, and only muttered to himself. His fellow-prisoner had no wish to engage him in conversation a second time.

After a while Benjamin heard a knock at the door, and a boy's voice called out to him: "I should like to let you out, only I am afraid of Father; you must have made him dreadfully angry or he would not have shut you up here; I should die with fright, if I were with that man who is possessed."

"Who are you?" Benjamin asked, going close up to the door.

"My name is Nathaniel, and I think I am your cousin. At least Giezi told me a cousin of mine was to be brought here. Do be reasonable and promise to do what Father tells you, that he may let you out and we may have a game together.

"Oh, you are a son of Ananus, who—" Benjamin was just going to speak of Ananus' treachery, but he checked himself, and said: "Very well Nathaniel, we will be friends; and if your father will let me out of this place, I will take care not to displease him again."

He made the same promise to Ben Caiaphas, when two or three hours later he came to the dungeon, and pledged himself besides not to repeat to any one what he had heard the brigands say, and which Ben Caiaphas assured him "was all a lie." So Benjamin was set at liberty, and soon Nathaniel and he became firm friends. He ingratiated himself also with Rachel and Ruth, the invalid sister, and thus in the otherwise joyless house the two women and the boys formed a happy little band amongst whom peace and harmony prevailed.

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## CHAPTER 20.

### **The Commencement of Hostilities.**

Once more the moderate party in Jerusalem succeeded in preventing the threatened insurrection. The great mass of pilgrims had dispersed to their homes, and in the space of a week after the great Feast of the Passover the city seemed in a state of tranquillity. But the fire smouldered beneath the ashes, and a fresh blast soon fanned it into a flame.

Gessius Florus took care that this should not be lacking. At the same time that tidings reached Jerusalem of an act of crying injustice towards the Jewish community at Caesarea on the part of the Procurator (although they had quite recently purchased his protection by a present of eight talents) a messenger was sent by him to the Chief Council with orders to take seventeen talents from the treasury of the Temple, pretending they were for the Emperor, in compensation for the affront offered to Florus by the accusations the Jews brought against him before the Legate. When this was known in the town some young men went about the streets carrying a basket and begging from door to door, in mocking tones asking an alms for "poor destitute Florus."

When this insult reached Florus' ears he was greatly enraged, and marched with an army to burn down the city. But the Council much alarmed, sent some of their members out to meet him, and appease him by a submissive and joyous greeting. Florus however told them if they were men of any generosity "not to jest upon him to his face,"<sup>1)</sup> and took up his quarters in the palace with a display of military pomp. Now again the timid crowd were to be crushed by the iron heel of the warrior.

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<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II. 14, 7.

The next day he set up his tribunal at the head of the marble flight of steps, on the exact spot where he stood to hear the charges brought against him. On either side lictors were ranged with their rods and sharp axes. The deputation from the Council came trembling into the presence of the angry Governor. He commanded them to give the names of the persons who had cast contempt on the vicegerent of the Emperor. This they could not, would not do. Then the Governor had the members of the deputation arrested and put in chains, and gave the soldiers permission to plunder the Upper Market, where the wealthiest merchants resided, as they would loot a conquered city, and slay all who should resist them. Any person of consequence who was taken bearing arms, was to be brought before his tribunal.

With loud acclamations the cohorts, always greedy of spoil, began their work of pillage and murder. Any persons brought before Florus he sentenced without even hearing them, to be crucified. Even Jews who were of the Equestrian Order, and consequently of Roman dignity, met with the same fate. According to Josephus<sup>1)</sup> no less than 3,600 men were put to death on that day.

Lysias the tribune, supported by Lucius Flavius and some other officers of rank, endeavoured in vain to mitigate the fury of the Governor. All they said seemed only to irritate him the more. "Pray when did it become customary for Roman officers to take the Emperor's representative to task for his proceedings, whilst, vested with the insignia of his authority he sits in the seat of judgment?" he angrily inquired of them.

"When Roman judges began to make flagrant misuse of their power," the tribune retorted.

Florus was in the act of ordering the lictors to arrest his insolent interlocutor, when to his surprise, he beheld Queen Berenice approaching his tribunal, and in what a guise! She might have been mistaken for a beggar.<sup>2)</sup>

The proud Berenice, sorely afflicted at the misfortunes of her nation, did in reality appear before the Governor

<sup>1)</sup> Ibid. II. 14, 9.

<sup>2)</sup> Ibid. II. 15, 1.

as a suppliant. Barefoot, her clothes rent, her head strewn with ashes, the royal lady, otherwise so haughty, stood in Florus' presence; and the spectacle filled him with such amazement that for the moment he forgot his anger against Lysias.

Berenice cast herself at his feet, and said: "Behold a mendicant, Procurator, prostrate at your feet, a mendicant begging for justice, for generosity, for mercy. For justice on behalf of the many innocent individuals whom your soldiers are slaughtering, for generosity and mercy on behalf of the few culprits, who are guilty of having derided you—"

"Spare your sweet voice, noble daughter of the Herodians," said Florus with a sneer. "Since when has it been usual for members of your House to set so much store on the life of a few innocent persons? I fancy I once heard it said that because of some bad portent, a star forsooth, which the astrologers interpreted as unpropitious to one of your ancestors, untold numbers of children were massacred. Spare your sweet little feet too, they are unaccustomed to dispense with the protection of sandals, and might be cut with a sharp stone. And for the future when you visit me or my officers, pray dress rather more suitably, and see that your lovely hair is in better order."

Lucius the Centurion could not contain his indignation. "For shame, Procurator, for shame!" he cried, and several other officers joined with him, while Lysias added: "You will have to answer to the Emperor for this, Gessius Florus." But the greater part of the soldiers who witnessed this scene burst into a roar of vulgar laughter, delighted to see the Governor treat the royal suppliant with such contempt. In fact some appeared as if they could actually maltreat the Queen who had risen to her feet, and now stood, deadly pale, surrounded by her female slaves.

Then Lucius stepped forward with his sword drawn, and with a stentorian voice exclaimed: "Whoever dares so much as to say one offensive word to the Queen, is a dead man! It shall not be said that a noble lady was insulted by Romans for the sake of a noble deed, without

finding one man at least to protect her, though I die for it ten times over!" And Lysias the tribune stood at his side.

Florus felt inclined to have the two men killed on the spot. But he saw that the courageous act of the officers, who were very popular with the troops, had made a great impression, and he was obliged for a time to pocket his annoyance, so he said: "Surely a man may have his little joke without offence. Go home now, Berenice, otherwise in your present becoming attire you will create a mutiny among my officers. Tomorrow two more cohorts are expected. If they are well received, and the town pays me, in addition to the seventeen talents out of the treasury, all the arrears of taxes due, some forty talents, I will spare the lives of the inhabitants. So now return home and recover from your fright."

With these words he rose from the seat of judgment and went into the interior of the palace. As he crossed the threshold he whispered something to his confidant Metilius, in consequence of which as Lucius and Lysias were coming back from the gate, whither they had escorted Berenice, Metilius called on them to surrender their swords and bade the gaoler Melech place them in confinement.

Melech had not forgotten the piece of gold which Lucius gave him; he conducted the two officers to the most habitable of the cells and provided them with clean straw and a small jar of wine, expecting naturally to be paid for this attention.

When he had left them, Lucius said to Lysias: "I am quite willing to part with my life, Lysias, for having spoken out as we did. And it will cost us our lives. That poltroon will never forgive us for acting thus. I expect every minute that he will send an assassin to kill us. It is not a pleasant way to die, but after all it is as much a soldier's death as if we fell on the battle-field."

"What do you anticipate after death?" Lysias inquired.

"How can I tell?" the Centurion answered with a shrug of the shoulders. "Our philosophers do not agree about it, they express pious wishes for a future life rather than definite opinions concerning it. The



arguments for it are worn threadbare. If they could prove that we are the children or the creatures of deities who are just, a death such as now awaits us would be sufficient evidence that the soul is immortal. For a noble deed demands its reward from a just God. But who connects any idea of justice with Jupiter? It is true the poets romance about the shades of the departed in the lower regions, and if their accounts were to be believed, we should have to wait a long time on the banks of the Styx, in vain beseeching Charon to ferry us over. For Florus certainly will not trouble himself to give us decent burial; more likely he will have our bodies cast out to feed the vultures. I know the poets talk of souls taken up on Olympus, where the gods are supposed to feast on nectar and ambrosia, but such is not the destiny of ordinary mortals, it is reserved for heroes and monarchs, for monsters like the cruel Caligula. Olympus is not for the poor, not for those who are unjustly murdered."

"What you say is only too true," Lysias answered gravely. "The creed we hold is utterly without consolation in the hour of death. I once heard a man—a Jew named Paul, I think I told you about him once—I heard him discourse before Felix on the immortality of the soul, and on eternal rewards and punishments, and my whole soul told me that what he said was true. God forgive me for not following the voice of my conscience then and there! When I was sent back to Jerusalem, I went to see Paul in prison, and he told me he would pray for me—I had as good as saved his life on one occasion—that I might inherit eternal life. He explained to me what I must do to obtain it; believe and be baptized."

Lysias then expounded to his young friend the principal truths of the Christian faith, which he had kept fresh in his memory, and told him what baptism was and how it must be administered. "This faith," he said in conclusion, "proposes to one's belief much that surpasses our comprehension, but how can man understand the divine nature, when so much in his own nature is a mystery to him? Besides, the Jewish prophet who died upon the cross proved the truth of His teaching by the

fact that He rose again from the dead. I did not hear this only from Paul, who solemnly assured me that he had seen the man after his resurrection, but from several eyewitnesses who corroborated his statement. Was there ever one of our philosophers who laid down his life for his tenets, asserting that as a proof of their divine origin, he should rise from the dead after three days?"

Lucius did not know what to believe. He was acquainted with the doctrines of the different schools of philosophy, but none satisfied him. But the notion of a Son of God who was crucified appeared to him not only incredible, but positively absurd. He shook his head, saying: "Lysias, some one of these eastern dreamers has been deluding you. A god suffering the death of a runaway slave is monstrous! It is a happy thing for you that you have not embraced such an idiotic creed."

"I wish I had, I wish I had been baptized. My conscience reproaches me for having stifled my convictions for the sake of my position! May He who was crucified and rose again forgive me! But I will put it off no longer. Take the pitcher and give me a christian baptism; repeat after me the words I am going to say."

At first the centurion refused to do this, but when he perceived that the tribune was really in earnest, he at length complied with his request. "There is no reason why I should not do it," he said to himself. "For my part I fail to see how such an external act can benefit the soul, that is if we really have an immortal soul. But my friend Lysias believes it, and this mystic cleansing will set his mind at rest. I will do what he asks of me."

So Lysias knelt down, declared his faith in Christ and acceptance of His doctrines and received baptism from the hand of the friend who was still a pagan.

The expected assassins never came. Florus had other matters to think about than the two officers, who hourly looked for death.

A blast of trumpets announced the coming of the fresh cohorts. In vain did emissaries of the Chief Council endeavour to persuade the populace, embittered by oppression, to greet them with an ovation to appease the Governor "Shall we, the children of Abraham,

the chosen people of God, allow ourselves to be slaughtered by these uncircumcised barbarians without offering any resistance?" they answered the Priests. "Let us rather die an honorable death, than be treated as dogs by these heathens."

Ere long stones began to be thrown and swords were drawn. Wedged in by the narrow streets, the cohorts entering the town had no space to deploy. From all the roofs a shower of missiles was rained down on them; and the men were obliged to form what was called a tortoise-shell, *testudo*, a shelter of the shields of the soldiers held over their heads as was done when a walled city was stormed. Meanwhile the front and rear were attacked by an infuriated mob. Of old the Jews were formidable antagonists in a hand to hand fight, and the superior skill of the Romans in the science of war was of no avail in this street encounter. With their valour they tried to storm the hill on which the temple stood, as it commanded the whole town, and from the Antonia fortress an attempt was made to clear the way for them by their comrades. Gessius Florus himself mingled in the fray. The contest was long and bloody; towards evening the Romans, driven back on all sides, were forced to withdraw to Herod's palace. Hundreds of corpses lay in the streets, for their loss was considerable. Florus saw that there was no chance for him unless he took refuge in flight. Under cover of night therefore he withdrew, taking with him the greater portion of the troops, promising soon to return and take dire vengeance. Meanwhile Metilius with one cohort was to hold the Antonia fortress at least, and the royal castle.

The party in the town who were for war were triumphant. The populace marched through the streets carrying the arms taken from the Romans, halting before the residence of those who had distinguished themselves in the encounter. Eleazar had been among the foremost to charge the Romans, at the head of the Temple-guard. So great was his prowess that he nearly succeeded in penetrating into the court of the palace, having pursued the retreating cohorts to its very gates. Ben Caiaphas was proud of his son's exploits. The crowd assembled

before his house hailed him as a second Judas Macchabaeus, as the Lion of Juda, and clamoured for him as their leader. Nathaniel looked with awestruck admiration at his older brother, saying: "Would that I were a few years older, and could wield the sword in defence of Israel as you do!"

Benjamin's eyes grew bright as he exclaimed: "We are quite old enough! Cannot we go out like young David with sling and stones against the Romans? We will get Giezi to make slings for us, and we will learn how to use them."

Ben Caiaphas drew his son into an inner chamber and gave him the kiss of peace for the first time for many years, expressing his approval of his conduct and his hatred for the Romans.

"Yes, Father," he replied. "I rejoice to measure my strength with theirs in open conflict, and shed my blood and risk my life for my nation. But I cannot take part in your underhand proceedings, and I will have nothing to do with your shady friends, the brigand chief Ben Gioras, Menahem the Galilean, and the rest."

Ananus frowned. "Without what you are pleased to call my underhand proceedings and the friendship of those men we could achieve nothing against Rome," he said. "You really ought to have more respect for your father, and allow yourself to be guided by him."

"Respect for parents is not one of the virtues of our family; what an admirable example you set me." Eleazar retorted.

"Be silent! You know very well that I keep the old man in confinement that his ravings about the Nazarite may not be made use of by that accursed sect. We can not have a carpenter for our Messiah."

"You are quite right there. It is a strange thing that their party should continue to exist and even increase, whereas the adherents of other pretenders who gave themselves out to be the Messiah, disappeared on the fall of their leader. Who now speaks of the Egyptian who a few years since, got together thirty thousand men and led them round about the city from the wilder-

ness to the Mount of Olives?<sup>1)</sup> But enough of the Nazarite. You had something to say to me?"

"I have. I am always concerned for your interests, though you really do not deserve it. But I cherish the hope that through you the credit of our house may be re-established as well as the freedom of Israel. The Rabbi's daughter must be made use of for that purpose. I have found out by means of spies whither the Romans have carried her, with the aid of the Herodians."

"Tell me, and I will fetch her away, even were she confined within the walls of the Roman capitol. I looked out today for that milk-sop of a Centurion, to give him a taste of my sword. But he did not venture to come within my reach."

"I will tell you, because in setting her free, we can further the interests of the people together with our private interests. She is confined in the fortress of Masada, and you know that Agrippa's arsenal is there, containing coats of mail and weapons of all kinds sufficient for some fifty thousand men. That is what we want in making war with Rome."

"I will go there this very day. One bold stroke, and Masada, and my bride, and equipments for all Israel will be in my power."

"Have patience for a few days! Our plans must be made first. I know of a key that will open the gates more readily than your sword."

"I prefer my good sword to any other key, even a gold one," Eleazar said proudly.

"Even if you had Goliath's sword, of which it is said that there was none equal to it, you might break it to pieces on the walls of Masada without any result. We must obtain possession of the arms at once if they are to be of any service to us. Leave it to me. The greatest strength is of no avail unless guided by discretion."

The next morning a herald summoned the people to meet in the Xystus, the place of public assembly adjoining Agrippa's palace. The party of peace desired to make one more attempt to prevent an insurrection. At

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, Wars of the Jews II, 13, 5. Cf. Acts of the Apostles 21, 38.

the request of the Chief Council, Agrippa had consented to point out to the multitude how preposterous it was to think of making war against Rome. The terms proposed were to ask the mediation of the Syrian Legate, to pay the arrears of the taxes, forty talents, and make peace with the Emperor.

The wooden galleries of the Xystus were crowded with a motley throng; the majority were armed men, who, their heads turned by the success of the previous day, would not entertain the idea of submission. Yet the harangue the king delivered was listened to attentively. Josephus records his speech in full.<sup>1)</sup>

Surrounded by his courtiers, Agrippa II. mounted to the flat roof of his palace, contiguous to the Xystus. His effeminate vanity was displayed by the gilt armour he wore, the purple mantle fastened on the shoulder by a costly clasp, his carefully curled, well-oiled locks confined by a golden coronet. At his side he placed his sister Berenice, who was cheered more enthusiastically than her brother, for she had gained popularity by pleading with the Governor for the people.

When quiet was restored by the heralds, the King began by saying that the best informed and most sensible of the people recognized the impossibility of war with Rome. He then showed that all the nations of the known world had submitted to her yoke, and gave an eloquent description of the greatness and invincibility of the Roman empire.

"The power of the Romans, he said, extends over all parts of the habitable world. Nay, they rather seek for something beyond that, for Euphrates is not a sufficient boundary for them in the east, nor the Danube in the north; for their southern limit Libya was not far enough, nor Cadiz in the west. In fact they have sought for another habitable world beyond the ocean; and have carried their arms as far as the British islands that were never known before. What therefore do you aspire to do? Are you richer than the Gauls, stronger than the Teutons, wiser than the Greeks, more numerous than all the inhabitants of this earth? What confidence is this

<sup>1)</sup> Wars of the Jews, II. 16, 4.

that inspires you to oppose the Romans? Perhaps it will be said, slavery is hard to bear; so it is, but not harder for the Jews than for the liberty-loving Greeks and all the other nations." These the King enumerated at length, concluding thus this part of his speech. "Who is there amongst you who has not heard of the great German nation. You have seen them to be tall and stalwart men, since the Romans frequently have them among their captives everywhere; yet these Germans who dwell in an immense country, who have minds greater than their bodies, souls that despise death, who fight more ferociously than wild beasts, have the Rhine for the boundary of their expeditions and are held in check by eight Roman legions. Consider also, you who rely so much on the walls of Jerusalem, what a wall the Britons had; the Romans sailed to them and subdued them when they were encompassed by the ocean and inhabited an island not less in size than our own land. Remember the fate of Carthage, which while boasting of the great Hannibal and the nobility of his descent from the Phoenicians, were subdued by the iron hand of Scipio."

After Agrippa had depicted in detail the much more oppressive yoke borne by the Egyptians, he asked the people on whom they counted as allies? On no human assistance? What then remained but to have recourse to divine assistance; this however was already on the side of the Romans, for it is impossible to build up so vast an empire without God's providence. Nor could they carry on war without transgressing God's law. If they observed the Sabbath they would be as easily conquered as they were by Pompey, who was never so busy at the siege as on those days whereon the besieged rested; yet if they violated God's law in the time of warfare, how could they call on Him to assist them? Without divine or human aid to go to war would be to hurry to evident destruction. They had better slay their wives and children with their own hands, and burn the city and the temple, so as to escape by this mad act the reproach of being defeated, and involving in their ruin the thousands of their fellow-citizens who dwell in other cities of the Roman Empire.

"Have pity therefore if not on your wives and children yet upon this your metropolis and its sanctuary. Spare the temple and preserve the holy house with its sacred furniture for yourselves. For if the Romans get you into their power they will no longer spare when they see how ungratefully their long suffering has been requited. I call your sanctuary and the holy Angels of God to witness that I have omitted nothing for your salvation. Consider what is to be done. If you will have peace, I will procure it for you: if you will have war, do not expect me to share in the result, the defeat which is a foregone conclusion."

Josephus tells us that this speech made an evident impression upon the audience. But they still cried out that they would fight not against the Romans, but against Florus, because of all they had suffered at his hands. To which Agrippa replied that they could not make war on an official appointed by the Imperial government without making war on Rome. He attempted to persuade the multitude to obey Florus until Caesar should send some one to replace him.

But they seemed all the more irritated, and a great tumult arose in the Xystus. "How long," Eleazar exclaimed, "would you have us submit to these blood-suckers, these voracious dogs! Not another hour will we, though all you predict should come true. How do you dare to tell us that we cannot rely on the divine assistance, when it is in defence of His holy law and of His altar that we draw the sword! Has He not promised His aid to us, His chosen people, and confirmed His promise by an oath? He must and will help us—I ask you, will you be our governor in Florus' place, and do your utmost to procure his accusation and condemnation at Rome?"

Agrippa made a sign of refusal, and seeing that the violence of the people was not to be restrained, turned with Berenice to withdraw. The multitude hooted him as he went, calling him a traitor; they even threw stones at him.

The breach with Rome was made irrevocable by the suppression, at Eleazar's instigation, of the sacrifice



daily offered for the Emperor. Agrippa hastened to leave the city with his sister; he left, however some thousands of his mercenaries, to support the Chief Council in their efforts to put down the rebellion. On the other hand Menahem, the son of Judas, who had already revolted against the Roman authority, and Ben Gioras with his band of brigands, came up to the city, to commence an unhappy internecine war within its walls, while Gallus the Legate was assembling an army of thirty thousand men, to re-conquer Jerusalem and re-establish there the Roman sway.

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## CHAPTER 21.

### **Rabbi Sadoc's Spiritual Blindness.**

The Rabbi Sadoc had passed the days—a brief reign of terror—during which the Procurator gave the troops liberty to rob and kill, in horror and alarm. He was by this time sufficiently recovered to leave his bed, and, from the window of his little chamber, overlooking a portion of the Upper Market, he witnessed the atrocities perpetrated there by the Roman cohorts. Every moment he expected the pillagers to enter the little house where he had been so hospitably received, and felt both his property and his life to be in danger.

Eusebius continued to nurse him with unfailing kindness. He now resided in the Deacon's house, since shortly after the Feast of the Passover Bishop Simeon had consecrated him also to that office. Nicanor had been sent to Pella, to make preparations for the reception of the Christian community on their leaving Jerusalem.

Sadoc frequently inquired of Eusebius, who brought him news of what went on in the city, whether his money-bags were in safety. He was able to speak again now, as his wound was healed, but he could only enunciate with difficulty, and not always distinctly, as the assassin's dagger had injured a muscle. The Rabbi was much concerned on that account, he feared it might render him ineligible for the office of High Priest. Eusebius set his mind at rest in regard to his property, saying the bags were carefully concealed, and good Angels would watch over the house and its inhabitants. "It is so inconspicuous," he said, "that it will not attract the notice of the Romans, while the large, richly furnished residences and shops on the Market Place offer the prospect of far more valuable booty."

In fact the Deacon's house and the old building of which it formed a part, which had the air of being uninhabited, escaped the hand of the plunderers. The fierce

conflict in the streets followed, in which the rebels gained the advantage, and the meeting in the Xystus, when war with Rome was decided upon. Eusebius informed the Rabbi of what had taken place, and asked him whether he thought of remaining in the city now that the outlook was so threatening; adding that if he did not wish to share its fortunes it was high time to depart.

The Rabbi was quite indignant at the question. "Of course I shall remain here," he replied. "Who would not throw in his lot with that of the sacred city of God?"

Eusebius answered: "My friends and I are not so sure that the Lord will extend His protecting hand over Sion. I may perhaps have to leave Jerusalem tomorrow or even today. At any rate I will give you back your property which you entrusted to my care, for I must be in readiness to be called away at any moment."

"Pray by whom? Are you not your own master? Have the Essenes a Superior, whom all the members of the sect must obey? For that you and your friend Nicanor are Essenes is a fact I have long known."

Eusebius hesitated for a moment as to what answer he should make. Should he acknowledge that he was a believer in Jesus of Nazareth? Was there any hope of Sadoc's conversion, or would the avowal only provoke him to blaspheme? The Rabbi appeared to have a just mind, so he finally said: "My dear Rabbi, I think you consider me and my friend Nicanor to be honorable men who would not without weighty reasons swerve on one single point from the teaching which the Priests and Doctors of Israel propose to us as the law of God?"

The Rabbi rejoined that he had from day to day conceived a higher opinion of their charity and conscientiousness, and that he did not consider the tenets of the Essenes to be incompatible with the Jewish creed.

"We are not Essenes," Eusebius replied. "If you will promise to listen calmly while I tell you what is my creed, and on what foundations it rests, I should like an hour's talk with you about religion."

"You surely are not a Nazarite!" Sadoc exclaimed in astonishment.

When Eusebius with a smile, informed him that his

guess was correct, the Rabbi grew so excited that the deacon thought he had better break off the conversation at once. But to this Sadoc would not consent; he considered it his duty to disabuse the mind of the man who had nursed him so charitably of so egregious a delusion as belief in a crucified Messiah.

The two men sat discussing the subject far into the night. Eusebius remained calm and collected, whereas the Rabbi grew more and more vehement and impassioned. The arguments that he found most difficult to grapple with were Jacob's prophecy that the sceptre should not depart from Juda until the Messiah came, and the dates given by Daniel, but even these he found means to evade, though not in a manner quite satisfactory even to himself. Eusebius did not press the point, but turned to the principal proof of the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, the proof of which the Apostles always put forward in their preaching, and which our Lord Himself mentioned beforehand as being conclusive evidence, His resurrection from the dead.

"As a proof that the prophet of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, He rose again from the dead," Eusebius said quietly. "If I prove that fact to be true, will you believe on Him?"

"You will never be able to do that," the Rabbi rejoined.

"You believe that He really died on the cross, and was not taken down and buried before life was extinct?"

"Certainly, our Priests and Chief Council never doubted that."

"Very well, otherwise it would be easy to prove it to you. One of the Roman soldiers on duty at the execution, thrust a lance into the side of the Crucified when he was already dead, and blood and water flowed out of his side. John the son of Zebedee was there and witnessed the act, as did many others who are yet alive and can confirm his witness."

"That is unnecessary. I want proof that he rose again. His disciples stole the body and spread that false report to annoy the High-Priest."

"Why then were they not brought before the judge

and punished for so gross a deception? And would His disciples have sacrificed their property and their life for a man who was crucified and whose body they were obliged to steal, since He did not rise again as He predicted? What madness it would have been, or rather what diabolical deceit! They were not capable of either; I know them. They were timid, but men of proved virtue and sound judgment. Nicanor and I know them; some are still living, others have shed their blood for their faith.

"Are you really acquainted with them personally?" inquired the Rabbi, whose countenance betrayed some perplexity.

"Not only are we personally acquainted with them, but we saw the Prophet after His resurrection. I saw Him with my own eyes."

"It was a ghost, an illusion of the devil!" Sadoc exclaimed.

"It was no ghost. He partook of food before our eyes, and to one of us who declared: 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, I will not believe! He said: Bring hither thy hand, Thomas, and put it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.' And Thomas did so, and falling on his knees he adored his risen Master, saying: 'My Lord and my God!' Could that have been a phantom? And would the living and true God have countenanced such a deception?"

Sadoc did not know what to answer, but he would not acknowledge himself defeated. "Were you present yourself, did you eat with him, did you touch him?" he asked.

"The eleven men whom He chose from amongst His disciples were witnesses to that scene."

"Only his friends! None of his enemies. Had he shown himself to any of them, I would believe. Or the High-Priests, why did he not exhibit himself to them?"

"What use would that have been? They knew full well, that He was risen from the dead. They saw the signs and wonders that took place at His death, the preternatural darkness, the earthquake, the rending of

the veil in the temple. They heard the witness of the soldiers set to guard His tomb, and yet they denied the resurrection. Did they deserve that the Lord should seek them out? The testimony of His Apostles ought to have been enough for them, when they saw them working miracles in the sight of all the people in confirmation of their teaching, when they found them willing to bear stripes and suffer death for their creed. Blinded by pride, they would not believe. And you, my friend, beware lest you close your eyes to the light of truth, your ear to the voice of grace. Enough has now been said. It is not in the heat of argument, but in quiet meditation and prayer, that the soul is convinced of the truth. Wherefore think over what has been said with prayerful attention, and may the God of all wisdom enlighten you."

Thereupon Eusebius left the Rabbi, whose whole soul revolted from the idea of acknowledging a crucified Messiah. On the other hand he was honest enough to own that the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth were incontrovertible. But there is a great difference between natural perception of a truth and supernatural faith; had the Rabbi followed Eusebius advice, grace would have come to his assistance. But unhappily he worked himself up into a rage against Eusebius and what he termed his sophistries, and ended by resolving to quit his house.

"I will have nothing more to do with these Nazarites," he said to himself; "Tomorrow they shall give me back my property, then I will go quietly and take a lodging somewhere, and try to find out whether Ezechias, who allured me hither, is as black as he is painted, or whether he and Ben Caiaphas have been calumniated."

With this resolution he laid down to rest. But sleep would not come to him. His unhappy boy and his daughter of whom he thought day and night engrossed his mind. He reproached himself for having forgotten them for a time in the interest of his discussion with Eusebius. What had become of his little Benjamin?

The messenger whom Nicanor had despatched to the brigand's camp, found it abandoned, and was unable to

obtain any trustworthy information concerning either the boy, or Eusebius' wife. And where was his daughter? Had she really allowed herself to be seduced by a pagan? He could not believe it of her. And yet a Roman officer had been seen to accompany the litter on which she left the city. No, there must be some mistake; his daughter could not be guilty of an act for which he could not do otherwise than curse her. But where was she, and how could he find her? If he only knew some one in the city who would help him! The few friends however whom he formerly had in Jerusalem, who were the only persons whose society he sought when he came from Antioch, were all dead, and since the decease of his wife he had sent offerings to the temple, as a substitute for personal attendance. Now he blamed himself for culpable negligence in the fulfilment of the law, and was inclined to regard the heavy calamity that had overtaken him, as a just punishment from the Most High.

A prey to these thoughts Sadoc tossed sleeplessly on his pillow. All at once he heard the outer gate, and then a knock at the house door. A few minutes later some one entered the adjoining chamber, which Eusebius occupied. A clear, boyish voice said, in tones so loud that Sadoc could not help hearing every word: "Forgive me for disturbing you in the middle of the night, Eusebius. But I did not know what else to do, so I have brought my treasure to you for safety. When I left my mother's house with it early on the day before yesterday, to deposit it in the cenacle, I found myself in the thick of the rebels. I was terribly alarmed on account of the sacred picture. But the blessing of our venerable bishop protected me, and my holy Angel guardian showed me a safe hiding-place. I had to stay there until now, and am half dead of hunger and thirst. At any rate however, I have saved the treasure entrusted to my safekeeping."

"Let us see my dear Paulinus," the Rabbi heard the deacon say, "whether the sacred image is uninjured. Thank Heaven that you and this holy relic are safe. See how gentle is the expression of His eye, looking at us from beneath the crown of thorns. Let us kneel down and adore our Saviour."

There, the Rabbi had heard it for himself! These Nazarites worshipped idols like the heathen. Venerated image, adorable relic, kneel down and adore it, what was that but the language of accursed idolatry. The Rabbi felt assured that Eusebius, with his hypocritical charity, was either deceived or a deceiver, and resolved to have nothing more to do with idolaters. "I now no longer believe what they told me about Ben Caiaphas. It is a lie from beginning to end, and I really believe they have only refrained from robbing me of my gold, in order under the cloak of kindness and justice to obtain possession of all I have."

The longer he thought, the more he bolstered himself up with these suspicions. The next morning he asked for his two money bags, and informed the astonished Eusebius that he was about to leave his house. In vain the deacon sought to dissuade him from this step, which the state of his health really did not warrant him to take; he begged him at any rate to acquaint him with the reasons of this sudden determination. The Rabbi persisted, showing signs of such irritation, that Eusebius was fain to fetch the two bags without another word. The Rabbi then asked to what amount he was indebted for the care taken of him during his illness. Eusebius answered that he had given his services for love, not for money; yet if the Rabbi liked to give him something for the poor, it would be accepted with gratitude. Thereupon the Rabbi opened his purse and counted out as many gold pieces as days had passed since the 13th Nisan, and laying them on the table said: "That will be enough. I will not be under any obligation to idolaters."

"Idolaters!" exclaimed Eusebius, more surprised than indignant.

"Yes, idolaters; Providence arranged that last night I should be an involuntary witness of the worship you and your disciple paid to an image. And I know that Jehovah on Mount Sinai spoke these words to Moses His servant: I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven image, to adore it."

"Come and see the picture! Not man but God Him-



self made it." And Eusebius drawing aside a curtain, disclosed the veil of Veronica, and began to tell the Rabbi the history of it. But he put his hands before his eyes, crying out: "It is the work of the devil! How can God act contrary to His own word!"

Eusebius made no further efforts to detain the Rabbi. He turned away with a sorrowful mien, saying to himself: "Poor man, how blinded he is! May God forgive him and bring him into the way of peace!"

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## CHAPTER 22.

### The Departure from Jerusalem.

War with Rome was now declared.

In the night following upon the outbreak of hostilities, Bishop Simeon assembled his deacons and levites and the elders of the congregation in the Cenacle. The chalice used at the Last Supper had been removed for safety to the vault or crypt beneath, when Florus gave orders to the soldiers to loot the chief houses of the city, and there the secret assembly of the Christians was held.

One of the brethren, a smith by trade, had with no slight skill, at Nicanor's suggestion, arranged a kind of shrine in the ancient masonry of the walls for the chalice. By pressing a spring, the existence of which was known only to the bishop and the deacons, a stone could be moved, revealing a niche, lined with costly material, just large enough to hold the chalice containing the sacred Host.

Before this niche Bishop Simeon with his clergy knelt awhile in silent prayer. Then rising up, he thus addressed the Christians who were present:

“I have called you to meet together in this place, my brethren, in order to speak to you in solemn accents, warning you that the days of tribulation, which our Lord predicted, have now come upon Jerusalem. You remember how on the day of His triumphant entry, when He ascended the Mount of Olives, and drew nigh to the city, seeing it, He wept over it saying: ‘If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and straighten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.’<sup>1)</sup>”

<sup>1)</sup> St. Luke 19, 41—43.

And when the disciples of our Lord and Master drew His attention to the vast size and splendor of the temple, and the massive stones wherewith it was built, He said to them: 'Do you see all these things? Amen, I say to you, there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed.'<sup>1)</sup> Again, when the Apostles sitting with Him upon Mount Olivet, over against the temple, asked Him when all those things should be fulfilled, He told them that a false Messiah should first arise and deceive many! Have we not seen that fulfilled with our own eyes? Then He foretold the signs that would immediately precede the judgment coming upon the nation: 'When you shall see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place; he that readeth let him understand.'<sup>2)</sup> 'And when you shall see Jerusalem encompassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst thereof depart out; and those who are in the countries, not enter into it. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled that are written. But woe to them that are with child, and give suck in those days; for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword; and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the nations be fulfilled.'<sup>3)</sup>

Such is the prophecy of our Lord respecting Jerusalem. And now, O my brethren, the Lord has intimated to me that the hour when His judgments will fall upon this unhappy city is not far distant. In His mercy He has indicated to me a sure haven, where we can be hidden until the storm is over, the village of Pella, amongst the mountains on the other side of Jordan. And as He predicts that the approaching disasters will come upon Jerusalem so suddenly and so quickly, that he who is

<sup>1)</sup> St. Matt. 24, 2. St. Mark 13, 2. St. Luke 21, 6.

<sup>2)</sup> St. Matt. 24, 15.

<sup>3)</sup> St. Luke 21, 20—24.

on the housetop will not have time to go down into the house to take his coat, I propose that we migrate without delay to the place of refuge. Parmenas, who was here for the Passover, informed me that accommodation could be found there for all the members of our little community, and I have already sent out to him Timon and Nicanor, whose discretion and zeal is known to all of you, with a considerable portion of the little property belonging to us. I ask you, venerable Elders, to conduct the Christian families over the Jordan; to each of you I have assigned a certain number, for whom you will be responsible. Look to it, therefore, that you see the sheep confided to your charge safely housed, before the avenging angel visits this ill-fated city to execute the judgment ordained by God for the sake of the blood of His only begotten Son which was shed, and which the people in their blindness called down on themselves and their children."

At a sign from the bishop, Eusebius read out a list of the families and the names of the Elders, to whom they were severally consigned, and all declared themselves to be agreed to the arrangements that were made. At that time there were not many Christian families in Jerusalem. The first persecution, to which St. James fell a victim, caused the dispersion of the community, and the hostility of the Sanhedrim towards the hated "Nazarites" continued to be as fierce as ever.

When this distribution of families was settled, Simeon went on: "Thus through your charity the flock under my care is provided for. Give each family notice tonight, and in the course of tomorrow or the next day endeavor to get them out of the city as discreetly as you can. Since all out of love to our Saviour in His poverty have laid down their possessions at our feet, there will be little difficulty about parting. Cast all your care upon the Lord! He who renounces all for His sake, has the divine promise that he will receive a hundredfold here below and when this earthly pilgrimage is ended, eternal life will be his portion. Therefore cheer the faint-hearted, should there be any such in my flock. May God's holy Angel accompany you, as he guided and protected the

people of Israel, when Pharaoh pursued after them with horses and horsemen.

There are yet some treasures to be placed in safety, treasures of our Church more valuable than gold and silver, the precious memorials which recall to our minds the inconceivable love, the bitter Passion of our Lord. We must endeavor to save them, that they may speak to future generations of the charity of our Lord. We know not where the cross is whereon He suffered; but I am convinced that in due time it will be discovered, and become an object of veneration to the whole Church. The lance that pierced His sacred Heart and caused water and blood to flow therefrom, was taken by Cephas to Antioch when he went to found a church there. But we still have in our possession the seamless tunic for which, in fulfilment of David's prophecy, the soldiers cast lots at the foot of the cross; we have the nails wherewith He was fastened to the cross, the crown of thorns which was pressed upon His head; the blood-stained cloth that was round His loins and the sacred winding-sheet wherein Joseph of Arimathea wrapped His body before laying it in the sepulchre. Bring out these, and the other holy relics; they shall be apportioned amongst our levites, and they shall join the different bands of fugitives, in order that these precious memorials of our Lord may be preserved to the Church of God."

Simeon's speech was ended. The relics were brought out and exposed for the veneration of the faithful. They were then wrapped in silken cloths, laid in their cases, and distributed amongst the levites, on whom the bishop duly impressed the sacred nature of the trust reposed in them. Only Paulinus, St. Paul's nephew, had none of the relics confided to his safe-keeping. This grieved the youth, for he thought it showed that the bishop distrusted him, he being the youngest of the levites. Simeon noticed his disappointment, and said: "God has other work for you, my son. You and your worthy mother will remain here."

When the relics had been given in charge to the levites, Simeon again spoke: "It is not possible for all

our brethren and sisters to quit Jerusalem. Many are prevented by advanced age or sickness from undertaking the journey; others are compelled by the circumstances in which they live to remain here. Several of our sisters are married to men who still serve tabernacles, they cannot and must not leave their husband and children. A considerable number besides are in the service of earthly masters, who exercise over them an authority given them by God. It will not do to leave so many members of my flock behind without any spiritual assistance or guidance, and at first I thought it was my duty to stay with them, but the Lord has given me plain indications that it is His will that I should accompany the bulk of the community to Pella. I have therefore decided to leave a priest behind in my place, and after fervent prayer my choice has fallen upon Eusebius, whose charity and virtue you all know. If any one here present knows of any fault which would be an obstacle to raising Eusebius to the priesthood, I call upon him in the name of Jesus Christ to declare it openly."

Not a single voice was raised in disapprobation of this choice, on the contrary, the community received the tidings with every sign of pleased concurrence. Thereupon Eusebius, to whom the bishop had already intimated his intention, stepped forward at his call, to receive Holy Orders. During holy Mass, which Simeon now proceeded to celebrate, he solemnly laid his hands upon him and conferred on him the mysterious power to change bread and wine into the true body and blood of Christ, and thus renew in an unbloody manner the sacrifice of the New Testament, once offered upon the cross with shedding of blood, in accordance with our Lord's command: "Do this for a commemoration of me." He also communicated to him that other, no less mysterious faculty, the power to forgive sins. As our Lord gave this power to the Apostles at the Last Supper, so the bishop handed it on to this, their successor in the sacerdotal office. He breathed on him, saying: "Receive the Holy Ghost: Whose sins thou shalt forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins thou shalt retain, they are retained." Finally he placed under his care the

Christians who were remaining in Jerusalem, saying to him the words Christ addressed to Peter: "If thou lovest Me, feed my sheep."

Sorrowful intelligence awaited Paulinus, when he left the cenacle at the conclusion of the service. It was brought by Rhode, who had been waiting for some time in the porter's lodge; she would have called the young man out of the chapel, only Malchus the porter would not allow it. He said the bishop had given strict orders that the assembly was on no account to be disturbed, and that the service must very shortly be ended.

"Young girls like you are so impatient," the old man said; "when you have got to a more sedate age, getting on for eighty as I am, you will have learnt patience."

"But, my good Malchus, just think if Paulina were to die, before her son comes back?" the girl said in expostulation. "She has had a stroke. I think it is paralysis."

"Nonsense, she is much too young for that. I should take her to be under sixty. It is probably not so bad as all that, besides I have always heard it said that our blessed Lady foretold that she would live to see the fall of Jerusalem. Well, certainly that may come any day now, judging by recent occurrences. I had my ear cut off once, but I could not live if my head was cut off. See, they are coming out of the Cenacle now. How grave they all look! The bishop must have been saying something very serious to them. There is the venerable Father with Eusebius and Paulinus, you can deliver your message now."

Rhode told her tale in a tearful and not very lucid manner, yet Paulinus gathered from it that something alarming had happened to his mother, and the bishop said he would accompany him to the house of Mary where she was. He also bade the newly-ordained Priest take with him the holy oils and the sacred viaticum, so that in case of danger of death, the departing soul might be fortified by the means of grace which the Lord in His mercy bequeathed to the Church.

In a few minutes they reached the little house, which

lay almost hidden in the garden between the Cenacle and the tall gloomy residence of Caiaphas, adjoining the western wall of the town. The door in the garden wall was almost entirely concealed by the overhanging boughs of old cypress-trees, in fact it would scarcely be noticed by a casual passer-by, and the house itself escaped observation altogether, so completely was it overshadowed by the thick foliage. Seraphia had died a holy death shortly after the Feast of the Passover, and the Bishop had placed Paulina in her stead over the little community of devout women who since the demise of the blessed Virgin had lived together, spending their days in prayer and contemplation and active works of charity.

When the bishop, together with Paulinus, entered the sick chamber, he found all the sisters kneeling round Paulina's bed. In a few kind words he told them to withdraw, and going to the window which opened on to the garden, he unclosed it; the aromatic fragrance of the morning air seemed to revive the sufferer, and restore her to consciousness. She opened her eyes just as Eusebius entered with the cherished remedies, and recognized her son who was kneeling beside her. With a melancholy smile she endeavored to raise her hand, and lay it on his head in token of her blessing. But her right hand was powerless; with difficulty she lifted up her left, and with it made the sign of the cross on her boy's forehead.

"There is no doubt that it is a paralytic stroke," Eusebius said to the bishop. "The Angel of death may spare her this time, but the right side is completely paralysed, and she may have another stroke."

"We will anoint her," the bishop answered. "According to the teaching of my holy predecessor<sup>1)</sup> the Lord instituted this sacrament not only for the remission of sin, but also for the healing of the sick, if that should be conducive to his spiritual good."

The sick woman made a sign of assent, and the bishop administered Extreme Unction. She then tried to speak, but her tongue was paralysed and she could not articulate a single syllable. Her son gave her the tablets and with her left hand she slowly traced the word 'Eucharist.'

<sup>1)</sup> St. James 5, 14.



Eusebius asked her if she was able to swallow, for he knew that after a stroke, this was frequently impossible. The sick woman thought for a moment, she then made the bystanders understand that she wished them to give her a particle of an unconsecrated host, with some water, that she might see if she could swallow it. This was accordingly done, and on her giving a sign to show that she had succeeded, Holy Communion was administered to her in the same manner. The faith and ardent desire manifested by the sufferer for the Bread of Heaven moved the bishop to tears. After communicating, she lay still, holding converse with her divine Lord.

“You have a saintly mother, my boy. She is, it is true, the sister of a saint, and this ought to be a stimulus to you, to become in your turn a saint. ‘We are children of saints.’ ”<sup>1)</sup>

So spoke the bishop, as he took leave of Paulinus, adding that he was to stay in Jerusalem with his mother, and assist Eusebius in the service of the poor and the sick. The devout women, however, with one or two exceptions who were wanted for the same purpose, were to accompany the rest of the faithful to Pella.

Then Rhode threw herself at the prelate’s feet and besought him to permit her to remain with her sick mistress and nurse her. Simeon willingly acceded to her request and gave her his blessing.

While the bishop was visiting Paulina, the Elders of the Church had been executing the orders given them. That same night they went round to all the families designated, and announced the tidings to them. The door was opened to their knock with the utmost caution, for the sanguinary events of the past few days had filled the inhabitants of Jerusalem with apprehension. But on being recognized, they were readily admitted. In some cases the summons to depart immediately was received with alarm and sorrow; but in most of the houses it was not unexpected, and it was obeyed with alacrity as was the command brought to Joseph by night by the Angel of the Lord: Take the child and his mother and flee into Egypt. The children were woke out of their sleep, clothes and other necessities were hastily

<sup>1)</sup> Tob. 2. 18.)

made into bundles, and all prepared to depart without delay, just as if the behest had come direct from the mouth of God. "The Lord will provide for us, and His holy Angels will be our guide," the good people said, as with prayers, not murmurs on their lips, trusting in God, they bade farewell to house and home.

In the early hours of the summer day they might be seen issuing from the city by its different gates. Their departure attracted little notice, for in those days many Jewish families left the city to avoid the horrors of war. Anyone who observed closely the various groups of refugees, could not fail to remark a striking difference in their demeanor. Some, with alarm and excitement depicted on their countenances, muttering imprecations on the Romans and Zealots, hurried on their way, anxious to secure the safety of their gold and of their persons. Others wended their way towards the Jordan in silent resignation, mostly on foot and in companies, mothers leading the mule on which their children were seated. The boys and girls ran on in advance, pleased, childlike, with the early start, and enjoying the fresh morning air; the adults followed carrying bundles, walking beside laden asses, or supporting the tottering steps of aged relatives. And who can doubt that the holy Angels, unseen by mortal eye, spread their sheltering wings over these christian pilgrims. On reaching a turn in the road, whence the last view of Jerusalem was obtainable, they paused, and looked back with tear-dimmed eyes at the temple in its glory, lighted up by the rising sun. "Would that thou hadst known the time of thy visitation!" was the thought that arose in the hearts of many, as with a deep-drawn sigh, they turned and pursued their way eastward to the country beyond the Jordan.

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## CHAPTER 23.

### In Masada.

The fortress of Masada was situated in the south of Judea, not far from the borders of Idumea. On the steep volcanic rocks which in the west shut in the deep, strongly marked basin of the Dead Sea, it rose in solitary strength, crowning a narrow mountain ridge protected on either side by wild ravines. The peak on which it stood was practically inaccessible, except on the east side where the southern extremity of the desert stretched its sandy plain. There a massive gateway, constructed of huge blocks of lava, forbade further progress to an advancing foe. The walls of the fort itself defied the blows of the heaviest Roman battering rams, as experience proved subsequently to the fall of Jerusalem.

In this nest among the rocks Drusilla and Thamar had taken refuge. "Here we are secure from the pursuit both of the Procurator and the Captain of the Temple," the Princess said to her companion, as the heavy gate closed behind them. "This spot is not without its attractions, solitary as it is. Look what beautiful gardens with palm-trees and babbling springs and cool grottoes my father conjured up between this tower and these walls in the midst of a wilderness! And you will find the rooms in the eastern tower—the rest of the buildings are arsenals—most comfortably furnished."

Thamar thought the apartments through which she was conducted fitted up not only comfortably, but with luxury and splendor. The view from the windows looking eastward was a melancholy one. Far below the leaden surface of the Dead Sea was discernible; beyond it, in the distance, were the dark declivities of the eastern range of mountains, behind which rose a blue line of hills, which were in the land of Moab. In the south the peak of Sinai and the adjacent heights were sharply defined. No dwelling-house, no castle, no homestead was visible as far as the eye could reach.

"It certainly is very lonely here," Drusilla remarked to her protégée, "almost more lonely than it would have been at Macherus among the mountains of the Ammonites where Berenice wanted to send us. But I dislike that place. My great-uncle Herod Antipas once committed a cruel act of bloodshed there, at the instigation of Herodias. Perhaps you may have heard of it. It took place at a banquet; for the sake of gratifying the whim of a foolish damsel, he had an innocent man beheaded, one too, whom all the people regarded as a prophet. Now nothing of that sort ever happened here, as far as I know, so we can sleep in peace."

These words reminded Thamar that she had once heard her father speak of an austere preacher of penance, named John, who was condemned by the scribes and Chief Council because he announced the coming of a false Messiah.

On account of the loneliness of Masada the two ladies were constantly thrown together. During the long hours of the summer days they sat together in the cool grottoes, and had many a long conversation, relating each to the other, the story of her life. Thamar had not much to tell of her early years, but Drusilla's past was by no means uneventful. When little more than a child, she had been ensnared into a union with Felix the Governor; she followed him to Rome and there gave birth to a son. After a short, miserable period of married life, she was separated from her husband, and returned to her native country; but she was forced to leave her child, whom she loved fondly, behind in Rome. At that time such marriages, quickly made and quickly unmade, were an everyday matter. Yet Drusilla was profoundly unhappy; for her life had lost all its pleasures.

She often spoke of this to Thamar, in accents of bitter self-reproach. "I forsook the God of my fathers and went after an idol of my own making. As a punishment He forsook me, and now I feel myself a castaway. O my sister, beware how you give your hand to a Roman! How Felix used to talk to me about love and fidelity, and yet no sooner had he seen the dark-eyed Neapolitan, who offered the prospect of a larger dowry than I had

brought him, than all his vows, all his fair promises were forgotten. If only he had let me keep my little Felicissimus! But it served me right; I forsook God and man in his turn forsook me!"

"You need have no apprehension that I shall give my hand in marriage to the Centurion Lucius as long as he is a heathen. And for the matter of that he has not asked for my hand, and probably never will," Thamar answered, absently pulling to pieces a rose which Drusilla had given her. "I pray for him, though, that he may be converted from his false gods to serve the true God. And if he were a proselyte of justice,<sup>1)</sup> or at least a proselyte of the gates, I hope that—but what am I saying! My poor father is dead, though I cannot help thinking of him as if he were alive. As I said, it would be folly to dream of being united to Lucius."

"And yet, poor child, your thoughts dwell on him day and night. How strange it is with us women, we hope and long for the very thing which makes us most miserable!"

"It was not your love, Drusilla, but your sin in forsaking God and His law for the sake of an unlawful affection that made you unhappy. To me it is incomprehensible how you could ever get over it to offer sacrifice to the adulterous Jupiter and immodest Venus."

"You fail to understand it because your love is pure and blameless, and it is not an ungovernable passion as yet. Alas! in the heat of passion worse crimes are committed! And when it has vanished as the smoke, it leaves the heart burnt out like the cinders and scoria round about here, and in the crater the soul lies without energy or life, like the Dead Sea that we behold out yonder."

"You must not lose courage on account of your fault. Our God receives the sinner graciously, if he turns to Him in true contrition of heart. How often our fore-

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<sup>1)</sup> Proselyte of justice was the name given to the heathen who was circumcised and pledged himself to fulfil the whole law; a proselyte of the gate was one who acknowledged the one true God and abstained from the worship of idols.

fathers fell away from Him and sacrificed to Baal and Moloch, yet He pardoned them if they returned to Him and destroyed their idols."

"If I could but believe and feel there was hope for me!" sighed Drusilla. "Grace was offered me, but I trifled it away. It was six years ago, when I was in Caesarea with my brother and the false Felix. The Jews brought up a man for judgment who came from Tarsus, and was accused of being an adherent of the new sect which they now call Christians. I was present when he spoke in defence both of himself and of his doctrines; and this he did so clearly, so eloquently, that I heard the voice of grace speaking to my heart, for I had never heard anyone plead like that before. But I stifled the interior voice, for at that time I still adored Felix. One of my slaves, Helena, who stood behind my chair whilst Paul was expounding the teaching of Jesus the Nazarite, drank it all in, and was baptized later on. I must acknowledge that from that day forth she was a changed girl. Formerly I used to have frequently to reprove her and chastise her, like all the other slaves, for carelessness, untruth, greediness and idleness, but since she has been a Christian, I have really had no fault at all to find with her. She is the most trustworthy of all my female slaves, and puts up with my cross moods with angelic meekness. One can see by her face that her heart is at peace. She does not spend what I give her on dress or frippery, but as far as I can tell, she gives it all to lepers and mendicants. She is a strange girl; one day I asked her why she did not put by the presents she received in order to purchase her freedom, and she calmly replied that she was quite content with her condition, and would rather lay up a treasure which neither rust nor moth can consume. In the sight of God a slave was equal to a prince, since the King of Heaven and earth had worn the garments of a slave for our sake."

Thamar remembered that the slave had said something of the same sort to her. She remarked that that was a singular notion, likely to cause an upheaval of all social order, if the monarch and the slave, the servant

and his master were all to be on the same level. "No doubt," she concluded, "they say that because the man whom they erroneously revere as the Messiah, was born in poverty and abasement, and was crucified like a slave."

"I have often pointed out to her the absurdity of this idea," Drusilla replied. "But she always has an answer ready. She tells me the Messiah came to atone for all the sins of the world. Now the origin and first cause of sin was disobedience and rebellion against God, and therefore the Redeemer came in the form of a servant and died the death of a slave. His teaching is based on obedience and submission, therefore it could never have the effect of inciting to revolt or the subversion of the existing order of things. They consider themselves bound to obey the pagan authorities both by the precept and example of their Messiah. In fact I never heard either my father or Felix complain of the insubordination of those people. They always pay the tribute and obey the imperial decrees if not against their conscience, whereas the Jews are terribly obstinate in this respect."

"I thought the Emperor ordered a wholesale massacre of the Christians quite recently, on account of some terrible crime!" Thamar said.

"So it was, if Nero is to be believed! But all Rome knows that he himself was the incendiary. And really they died like heroes! Felix made me go out with him to see the horrible spectacle in the grounds of Agrippa's palace, where the unfortunate creatures were chained to stakes, and burnt like living torches. We were driving together with several senators and knights, in the wake of Nero's chariot; he himself acted as charioteer, and urged his horses onward between the ranks of those unhappy victims sacrificed upon the altar of a tyrant's whim, a horrible burnt offering. As we passed by them, I heard them praying for their murderer, instead of cursing him; then I fainted, and I assure you the horrid sight pursues me even now in my dreams."

This instance of the love of one's enemies, a virtue unknown under the Old Dispensation, was more than Thamar could understand. Was it the loftiest virtue

or consummate hypocrisy? She remembered having heard something similar of a young Nazarite, who prayed for his adversaries while they were stoning him. Then it suddenly occurred to her that Jesus had done likewise upon the cross.

How deeply she had been touched by the affecting narrative that Eusebius read! And yet since that time she had hardly thought of it again. The tornado of events that had swept over her latterly had diverted her mind from the question whether the crucified One could possibly be the Messiah.

Now the doubt rose up again within her, and during the lonely hours she spent in Masada, gazing out over the moon-lit waters of the Dead Sea, or on the vast, silent wilderness, she recalled all that she had then heard, the proofs Eusebius had given of the resurrection, the kindness shown to her father and herself at Bethania. And as she not only had a good will, but also prayed to be enlightened, the prejudices in which she had been brought up were gradually dispelled, and the truth began to dawn upon her.

Helena the slave was often allowed to join in the conversation of the two ladies when they talked of the Hope of Israel. One fair August evening they were thus sitting together in the grounds, speaking of the predictions of the prophets concerning the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, which Thamar depicted in vivid colors. But Helena could also quote the same inspired writers to prove that Christ must suffer, and thus enter into His glory. The passages she cited from Isaiah and from the Psalms were so conclusive, that Thamar could only wonder that she had hitherto been so blind to their true meaning.

"But how have the prophecies been fulfilled which promise universal dominion so clearly to the Messiah?" Thamar inquired. "We see nothing like that now. Israel is still captive, and the Romans hold sway over the whole world."

Helena answered: "Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world. He came to found a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of grace and of peace, which should embrace



the whole earth. In Him are not the sons of Abraham alone, but all mankind to become the children of God and heirs of Heaven. And as the Son of God became our Brother, so all men ought to be brethren. This holy precept of charity towards God and man, which proceeded out of Sion, is already spreading throughout the Roman empire, and will vanquish the hearts of all nations. And then the Messiah will come again, in the time appointed by the Father, no longer in the garb of a slave, but as the king of glory, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then, and not till then, shall the predictions of the inspired prophets be fulfilled. Happy those who believe in Him, who suffer for Him and with Him, for they shall reign with Him to all eternity!"

"It is a beautiful, elevating idea, this spiritual kingdom of love and justice," Thamar exclaimed enthusiastically. "But will it not be a king of Israel's race, a scion of David's royal house who shall rule over this future kingdom?"

"Jesus Christ is a Son of Abraham according to the flesh and a descendant of David. He is the ruler of this kingdom now and for evermore," Helena rejoined.

"Is He then still on earth, in a visible form? It appears to me that as His kingdom is composed of living subjects, it must also have a visible Head."

"How correct your judgment is!" answered the slave. "In very truth the Messiah did appoint a visible vicegerent to govern His kingdom on earth until He comes again, and gave him the name of Cephas, (rock) because upon him as upon a cornerstone He rests the structure of His Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail."

"Where does this Cephas live? Is he to be seen in Jerusalem?" Thamar inquired eagerly.

Helena shook her head as she replied: "Jerusalem is doomed, her temple will be destroyed, because in her blindness she did not acknowledge the Messiah. Cephas is in Rome now."

"Then Rome, not Sion, is the centre of the Messiah's earthly kingdom. By telling me this, you go near to overthrow all that your words have built up!" Thamar said with evident annoyance.

"Is He not the master, is He not at liberty to choose or to reject according as it seems right to Him, as the potter shapes the clay in his hand. Israel is besides not entirely cut off; the Son of God was sent to the Jews and they would not have Him to rule over them, because He was destitute of the external pomp and grandeur that surrounds an earthly king."

"You are right, Israel was justly cast off. But what must one do, in order to become a member of this spiritual kingdom, which begins in time, but lasts to all eternity?" Thamar asked after a lengthened pause.

"One must accept the teaching of the Messiah and be baptized." — Helena would have said more, but the conversation was broken off by an unexpected accident, which had momentous consequences as far as Thamar was concerned.

While they were talking it had grown late, and the evening breeze brought a refreshing coolness. They were sitting by the fountain in the inner court of the castle, the gate of which stood open. A servant now advanced through that gate, and approaching the ladies, informed them that a messenger demanded admittance, and the gatekeeper was about to open the outer gate of the castle. Drusilla, who was naturally of a timid disposition, asked him why the inner gate was not closed? Prudence and caution demanded that the inner one should be shut before the outer was opened.

"Yes, yes, your highness is perfectly right," the man responded. "That is what I just told the gatekeeper; one must be on one's guard against these gangs of robbers from Idumea and Moab! Besides, the watchman declares that this very day he descried from the battlements an unwonted glitter in the defile leading from Hebron, which he strongly suspects came from a number of lances. However, the gatekeeper told him he was a fool and said the wine of Engaddi had got into his head."

"This is quite irregular," Drusilla exclaimed in alarm. "Let the inner gate be immediately closed, and bid the castellan come here to me at once."

The servant stood scratching his head, and slowly

replied: "I have two orders given me, and only one pair of legs; Am I to tell my legs, which are to a certain sense my servants, to run to the Commandant, and say he is to give the gatekeeper a good scolding, or shall I order them to carry me first to the gatekeeper—"

"What a dunce you are! Go and shut the inner gate before you do anything else, and I will not have the outer gate opened until Syntyches the castellan is here with a sufficient number of armed retainers."

"Well, it is all the same to me; do not put yourself out, madam. I will explain it all fully to the gatekeeper. But he will say it cannot be done. For how can the Captain go out to him with his men, who must fetch their arms, if the inner gate is closed. Besides you will have to wait a little, for Syntyches is sitting over his wine with all his officers, and if he has any sense, he will offer me a glass. That is the second reason why it would be better for me to go first to the Commandant, who loves good liquor, and not to the gatekeeper, who would grudge me a drink of cold water."

"The man is enough to drive one mad!" Drusilla exclaimed.

"Is he really stupid or is it all pretence? Helena, go instantly to the castellan and request him to come here immediately.—But what do I hear, the bolts are being drawn back and the doors grate on their hinges!"

"So they are. And I hear the tramp of armed men passing through the archway. Quick, Helena, come and help me shut the inner gate."

So saying, Thamar sprang to her feet and hastened to the gate, the others following her; but before she could move one of the heavy doors, Eleazar made his way into the gardens, his sword drawn and accompanied by his men, and in an instant the court was full of soldiers. The dilatory castellan, who came running up with half a dozen men, was struck down by the intruders, and no further resistance was made. The gatekeeper had been bribed to unlock the gates, and the castle with its well-filled armory was now in the hands of the enemy.

Eleazar told Drusilla that she had no cause for alarm. He would it was true, take possession of the fortress

and all its stores for the people of Israel, since now they were at war with Rome and her brother Agrippa. The option would be left to her to remain there, or to take up her residence elsewhere. He showed her this leniency for the sake of her sister Berenice, to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem were indebted for her courageous intercession on their behalf.

"Then I am at liberty to withdraw with all my retinue?" the Princess inquired, with a sigh of relief.

"With all your women, excepting this daughter of Juda, who is to come with me," Eleazar replied. With a beating heart Thamar followed him into a room on the ground floor of the castle, which was brilliantly illuminated by the moon.

"Now at last I have you in my power, daughter of Sadoc," Eleazar began.

Summoning all her courage, Thamar answered: "Is it on my account that you have come, and is this your way of wooing me?"

"Not entirely on your account; partly for the sake of the arms that are stored here. War with the Romans is declared. I have defeated Florus and his cohorts. You will see me at the head of Israel's forces, and you will be proud to hear yourself called the bride of the second Judas Machabeus."

"Never of my free will shall I belong to you, even were you a hero like Machabeus," Thamar replied.

"But you would gladly give yourself to that beardless boy, that heathen Centurion, you, a daughter of Abraham!" Eleazar retorted, with flashing eyes.

"Do you imagine that I am not aware that the devout Esdras rent his garments and sat moaning until the time of the evening sacrifice on account of such ungodly alliances with the heathen? And am I not a daughter of the tribe of Levi, the child of one of Israel's Rabbis? Never will I espouse a heathen!" Thamar indignantly rejoined.

"If you will not accompany me as my bride, you shall accompany me as a captive; You must and shall come with me to my father's house," the captain answered.

"I am only a weak woman, I cannot contend with

you. You can of course use force. But I simply ask whether such an act is one of which a hero should be proud or ashamed. You had far better sell me as a slave, if the law gives you power to do so, than endeavor to compel me to marry you."

"It is not I only who desire it, my father and your father both wish for our union. And am I a monster, that you should regard it with such horror? I am not lame or deformed, on the contrary, all Jerusalem looks after me with admiring eyes, when I walk through the streets in my glittering armor, a head higher, like Saul, than the men around me. Am I not the descendant of a noble sacerdotal race? Have I not already gained renown, and shall I not gain yet more so, that your husband will be hailed as the Sword of Israel, as its deliverer and king? O foolish maiden, think no more of that Centurion who is either already dead or certainly will not leave Jerusalem alive; I will take care that his body is thrown out for jackals and vultures to devour. Think of him no more, and this silly girlish freak of setting your affections on a heathen shall be forgiven you."

"You have nothing to forgive. I have never exchanged a word, a look with the noble Roman of which the most modest virgin in Israel could be ashamed. His image will always be in my heart, and it appears all the fairer when his magnanimity is contrasted with your meanness. I am not what you care for, it is my dowry that you want. Quick, give me ink and papyrus, I will make over to you all I possess, and then take my life, rather than force me to contract this hateful marriage. You would do me a kinder act in giving me my death-blow rather than compelling me to live in your detested company under the roof of your wretched father."

Thamar uttered these words with a look of indignation in her eyes. Eleazar thought he had never seen so beautiful a woman. Till then he had only wished to make her his wife because his father had urged him to do so, and the idea of repairing the ruined fortune of his house with her ample dowry had also weighed with him. But now she inspired him with a real passion, while at the same time it wounded his pride to be condemned by this beautiful and noble maiden.

"I appear contemptible, it seems, beside that Roman fool, who has bewitched you in some malign manner, so that you regard him as the type of manly generosity. You cannot love me because you despise me, you say, and you dare to asperse my father's character, who, though he has his faults, is a thousand times more virtuous than the best of those accursed pagans. What mean act have you seen my father or me commit, to justify you in condemning us in this sweeping manner? Tell me, in the name of justice!"

Eleazar spoke in the accents of one who felt himself deeply aggrieved, and it was impossible to doubt his sincerity. Thamar looked him full in the face, with surprise, as she answered: "Must I really go over it all with you? You surely know why, by whom, and with what representations my poor father was enticed to Jerusalem?"

"Of course, it was my father. He wanted to make him High-Priest, in order that for once Israel might again have a worthy Head, and the means of gaining allies against the Romans. That was his design, as he told me, and I approved it. Was there anything mean in that?"

"No, he acted from motives of policy and cold calculation. But what name must one give to the compact which you and your father made with Ben Gioras? The agreement that my poor father should be assassinated on the way hither, in order that you might get my little brother and myself into your power as unprotected orphans? Was not that abominably mean?"

Eleazar turned white to the lips. Then he raised his hand to heaven and swore a solemn oath: "By the God of my fathers I will renounce all my share in the hope of Israel, if I ever heard a word of such infamous treachery! And I do not think my father is capable of so foul an act. You must have been deceived."

Thamar saw that Eleazar had not been made privy to his father's dark design; she hastened, with the eagerness of a generous heart, to repair the wrong she had done him. In a very different tone she begged his pardon for her rash judgment, declaring that she fully

believed his solemn assertion that he had no part in the treachery. Yet she maintained that his father was guilty of it, and told him the proofs she had.

Eleazar replied that he would sift the matter thoroughly. Ben Gioras had oftentimes conferred with his father, but only, he thought as yet, about political questions. The assistance he could give in war with the Romans was not to be despised. "I feel almost certain," he continued, "that you have been misinformed as to my father being an accessory to the crime. Woe betide him if he were! By my sword, I would sever the bond of blood, and have him dragged before the tribunal of the judge as a robber and murderer! Your little brother, whom my father ransomed from Ben Gioras at a heavy price, is now under our roof. I will cross-question him thoroughly. And I will speak to Ben Gioras about it, he has the courage of his deeds."

"Is Benjamin with you?" Thamar exclaimed in joyful surprise. "That will make me much more willing to accompany you to your father's house."

"Then you withdraw your opposition?"

"What use is it to struggle, since you threaten me to use force? I have already told you that never will I consent to be your bride."

"And I am too proud to compel you! But I still hope in time to win your esteem and affection, so that you may give a willing assent to our union. For the present you will come with me as a member of the family. And you shall not be forced to live in my father's house, until I have cleared his character of the suspicion which you think attaches to it. Prepare therefore to start early tomorrow morning on the journey to Jerusalem."

With a respectful salutation Eleazar withdrew.

Thamar felt she had been unjust in her estimation of Eleazar's character. He was not so ignoble as she had thought him to be, and would gladly have placed herself under his protection, though she would never entertain the idea of espousing the haughty warrior. And oh! how delighted she would be to see her dear little brother again and comfort him! With these thoughts in her mind Thamar sought her chamber, for Drusilla had already withdrawn to own apartments.

Helena was waiting to assist her mistress to undress. Thamar told her in a few words the purport of her conversation with the Captain, and that she would have to leave her.

"What about your belief in the Messiah and your admission into His kingdom, which you seemed to desire? Oh do not act like Drusilla, who let the day of grace pass by and now cannot come to any determination!" Thus the slave spoke in accents of entreaty.

"You are right; this is a matter which far outweighs in importance all earthly concerns, as it affects one's eternal happiness. I promise you that I will carefully examine all your arguments, which appear to me convincing, and I will act according to my conviction. Do you know anyone in Jerusalem who could solve my difficulties and admit me into the kingdom of the Messiah?"

Helena gladly complied with her request, and parted from her with the assurance that she would pray for her. Thamar herself prayed to the God of her fathers for enlightenment, and for protection amid the dangers which she must inevitably encounter. Finally she dropped asleep, and was still in a heavy slumber when the sun had risen over the mountain heights of Moab.

The servants had to wake her, for Eleazar was eager to announce his victory and display his booty in Jerusalem. The parting from Drusilla was brief but affecting; then Eleazar lifted Thamar on to the saddle before him and galloped off with his little band of followers in the direction of Hebron.

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## CHAPTER 24.

### Eleazar's Triumph.

In the early part of the month of August in the year 66 A. D., Jerusalem was split into two camps. The Zealots under the generalship of Eleazar held the mount on which the temple stood with several thousand *Sicarii* and a division of the Galilean troops. Opposite to them, on Mount Sion, the little army was encamped which Agrippa had sent to assist the High-Priest and the members of the Council who were for peace, in suppressing the insurrection. The Antonia fortress and the royal palace alone were occupied by the Roman cohorts. The war-party increased daily; all the inhabitants of the city who had little to lose and all who were zealous for the law, flocked to the temple mountain.

Weapons only were wanting to equip the multitude, consequently the tidings that the expedition which Eleazar had secretly conducted against Masada had been completely successful, and that he was returning with a large supply of arms to Jerusalem, was hailed with enthusiastic delight.

"Let us go out to meet him," the people congregated in the court of the temple exclaimed, on hearing that the caravan bringing the arms was encamped at Bethlehem. "Menahem with his Galileans may guard the temple in our absence." And that same night thousands of men marched to Jerusalem, where they equipped themselves in the armor taken from the enemy, buckling on breastplates, thrusting the brass helmets on their heads, brandishing sword and shield in high glee, while they shouted: "All hail to Eleazar! Long life to our leader! Hail, sword of Israel, hail Lion of Juda!"

Thus Eleazar's troops made a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, preceded by hundreds of the citizens shouting Alleluia, and wearing their newly-acquired armor, which gleamed blood-red in the rays of the rising sun.

Then came Eleazar, seated proudly on his black charger; holding his head high he cast a satisfied glance over the crowds who pressed around, dancing and singing: Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Behind him followed Thamar, riding on a white camel, closely veiled to the eyes, her heart beating high at the sight of the jubilant multitude that formed Eleazar's escort. The rear was brought up by the heavily-laden camels, on either side of which marched the men-at-arms in ranks four or five deep.

Now before her eyes rose the walls and battlements of Jerusalem, whilst in the distance shone the gold-plated roofs of the temple. "Is it possible," Thamar asked herself, "is it possible that Israel shall be delivered, and delivered by him whom the exulting people designate as my affianced husband?" There is something infectious in universal rejoicing; the young girl felt her pulse throb more quickly as her eyes rested on the bold horseman who rode on in front of her, with the air of one who had already defeated the armies of Rome. And as she passed by Hippicus, from its battlements a few Roman arrows whizzed innocuously through the air. Immediately Eleazar placed himself at her side, covering her with his shield, remarking with a sneer, as one of those missiles rebounded from its surface; "This is an attention on the part of our friend the Centurion. He grudges you to me, though he despairs in winning you himself."

As the cavalcade neared the Bethlehem Gate, a crowd of women came out to meet them, beating cymbals and playing on timbrels with tinkling bells, dancing and singing in chorus: "Glory to the Conqueror of Masada! Hail to the Champion of Israel, the Defender of his brethren against Rome! Hail to his bride, the bride he has chosen for himself amongst all the daughters of our people!"

Thus they came to the wide flight of steps which led from the lower city up the hill to the northern portal of the outer court of the temple. Eleazar sprung from his steed, and while the camel knelt, helped Thamar out of the saddle. Then between a double row of armed men, who with their shields warded off the missiles thrown

from the adjacent tower of Antonia, the Captain of the Templeguard conducted the fair damsel to the threshold of the sanctuary.

At length Thamar's feet stood on the holy hill, which she had hoped to ascend for the first time with her father at the time of the Paschal feast. She trembled with excitement as she passed under the archway, and saw before her the buildings of the temple. The shouts of triumph still rang in her ears, the shouts which had welcomed her as the bride of Israel's champion, and this triumphant entry seemed to cast a spell upon her which she found herself impotent to resist. Had not Eleazar been designated by her father as her future spouse? Had he not behaved most generously towards her? Must not she confess that she had judged him unjustly? And now that all the people welcomed him as a hero, a deliverer, a precursor of the Messiah, how could she help a certain pride in him mastering her heart?

Thoughts such as those were however banished from her mind by the majesty, the sanctity of the spot, as she gazed on the glorious temple, visible between the massive pillars of the colonnade. She withdrew her hand from Eleazar's grasp saying: "The tabernacle of God amongst men!" And she began to cross the spacious court in an oblique direction, towards the marble flight of steps by which admittance to the Court of Women was obtained.

But Eleazar held her back, pointing out to her that that portion of the outer court was exposed to the darts hurled from the Antonia. They were obliged to seek the protection of the cloisters, and thus reach the great Corinthian Gate.

As Thamar mounted the marble stairs at Eleazar's side, which led on to the terrace of the fortress, whose walls separated the outer courts from the temple itself, an incident occurred which speedily brought her thoughts back from heaven to earth. The fort was garrisoned by Galilean troops under Manahem's command, and the latter, instead of greeting the returning victor as a brother-in-arms, met him with a body of men at the top of the steps with an insolent swagger, and made as if he would bar his ingress.

"We Galileans are strong enough and valorous enough to defend the sanctuary against any number of uncircumcised heathens," said the rough peasant-chief with the braggart pride of the uneducated. He was deeply offended at the ovation Eleazar had received, while his own services to the country had until then met with no public recognition. "It would be better for the future for you and your troops to guard the cloisters and outer walls. And if you hanker after the applause of the populace, why you are at liberty to storm the Antonia, that would be more like the act of a hero than taking a castle by vile treachery instead of by the sword."

Eleazar turned white with rage at the insulting address of the clownish Galilean. "You dare speak in that way to me, the son of the High-Priest and the chosen Captain of the Temple? You shall pay for this with your blood." And as he said this, his sword leapt from the scabbard.

A deadly struggle would have ensued between the two commanders, had not Thamar thrown herself between them and implored them to remember the sanctity of the spot. "Would you take one another's life on the threshold of the temple," she cried, "in sight of your common foe. Put up your swords and give your hand one to the other like brethren, and each do his part in the defence of the sanctuary."

These words, and still more the manner in which they were uttered, made an impression on the boorish Galilean. He held out his hand, saying to Eleazar: "I meant no harm. You can garrison one half of the fortress with your men. Only I claim for myself the precedence at the next great solemnity. Remember I am the son of that Judas who in the time of Quirinus declared that it was unlawful for the worshippers of Jehovah to bow down to the Romans, while Caiaphas and other of your teachers disgraced themselves by permitting it. What, you will not take my hand? Shame on you, to take offence at so small a thing! But do as you please; I will not crouch to you for your favor."

For the moment Eleazar suppressed the anger that

boiled within him, but in his heart he swore to take bloody revenge. Without another word he followed Thamar, who proceeded between the ranks of the Galileans, who made way for her, to the east portal of the temple. Struck with the splendor of the golden gates, she knelt awhile in silent adoration. Eleazar was in no mood for prayer; the affront his pride had just received wounded him to the quick and the bitterness he felt outweighed the delight his triumph had caused him.

When Thamar rose from her knees, he conducted her across the Court of the Women to one of the side buildings, where the virgins dedicated to the service of the temple resided. The aged lady who presided over them, Phenenna by name, was related to him, and of her he had thought, when he promised Thamar that for the time being he would find an abode for her elsewhere than in his father's house. Where indeed in the whole city, now disturbed by the tumult of warlike preparations, could so suitable, so safe a retreat be found for her as the temple? This he explained to her, as they passed through the gallery before the door of the house occupied by the virgins, and never before had he seen so heartfelt a look of gratitude upon any countenance as that wherewith she rewarded him.

Eleazar's knock was answered by an old portress whom he knew, and to whom he communicated his purpose. She admitted him into a reception room, divided by a high wooden grating, behind which Phenenna soon came forward to speak to him. She was tall, somewhat bent by age, and leant upon a staff. Her bright eye rested kindly upon Eleazar and his companion, who saluted her respectfully.

"I am bringing to you Thamar, the daughter of Sadoc, one of the teachers of Israel, whom my father destines for my spouse, according to the law of Moses. This is however the time for war, not for love, and I have sworn not to take my bride into my house until not a Roman remains in this holy city, in the country which the Lord gave us for our inheritance. Unhappily her father was slain by robbers on the way to Jerusalem; wherefore I thought it best to place the maiden under

your protection. Take her then, and keep her safe in the house of God, until I return as a victor, as the deliverer of Israel to claim her at your hands."

"May the Lord grant you victory and salvation to His people," Phenenna rejoined. "Remember, you can do nothing in your own strength, unless the Lord gives might to your arm. I heard of your triumph; give the glory to God, lest He reject you on account of your pride, as He rejected Saul. Fasting and prayer, wonders and signs will alone have power to overcome the armies of Rome."

"Fast and pray as much as you like," answered Eleazar impatiently; "I must away and cannot stop to listen to your well-meant, but unnecessary admonitions. Farewell, Thamar, forget the Roman. By the God of our fathers, never will I suffer you to wed a heathen, after seeing, as I did today, that you have within your breast a heart capable of heroic deeds, that you are worthy to be the bride of Israel's leader."

He was about to depart, but the old woman called him back, chiding him for his impatience, and telling him she did not yet know whether this daughter of Levi could be received amongst the virgins. Thereupon she put a number of questions to Thamar, mentioning the rules to which she would have to conform. Thamar assured her that she was prepared to obey her in every thing and observe the regulations of the house. When all formalities had been gone through, Phenenna declared herself willing to receive the damsel provisionally, and the Captain took his leave.

Thamar was then admitted into the interior of the house, which formed a wing of the temple buildings. On the ground floor were long workrooms, in which the young women purified the priest's vestments which were often sprinkled with the blood of the sacrificed victims, or made new ones of white linen. Phenenna took Thamar first into her own apartment, and made her tell her all her story. She adroitly contrived to learn at the same time all about the Roman of whom Eleazar had spoken with such undisguised jealousy, and rejoiced to find her new charge so simple and pure-minded. Con-

cerning the conduct of her relative Ben Caiaphas she did not venture to give an opinion. She only said that for some time past an unlucky star seemed to dominate the house of Caiaphas, she could remember the day when their fortune began to turn. Now however the malign influence seemed to be on the wane; Eleazar promised to distinguish himself as a hero. If only he could bridle his proud, hasty tongue. Thamar must help him to do this; a good, prudent wife might be the saving of her husband.

She then promised Thamar to send for her little brother presently, and had her conducted to her cell, the window of which looked out on the Women's Court in the temple. Thamar could not see the door of the sanctuary, as the building at right angles, separating the Court of the Women from that of the Priests, entirely shut it off; she saw however the roof with its golden tiles, and reverently watched the clouds of incense that ascended from it. She followed Phenenna's advice and laid down to rest awhile, for since her departure from Masada she had had no sleep.

Late in the afternoon she was roused by a knock at the door. "Are you asleep, daughter of Sadoc?" a voice inquired. Thamar started up bewildered, from a confused dream. Where was she? Surely she knew that voice? It was Sara's! She must be dreaming, but no; the odour of the burnt offering, the smell of incense which filled the house recalled her to herself. "Sara, is it you? Come in," she cried; and in another moment she was clasped in the arms of her good old nurse, who laughed and wept for joy.

It was some time before Sara was sufficiently composed to relate her adventures. "When the Roman Procurator drove me out into the street with contempt and abuse, for a long time I did not know where to go for a night's shelter, or where to turn for a bit of bread. I went up to the temple, and besought the Lord to provide for me. My prayer was heard; I went to the house where the virgins of the temple live, to ask for relief, and they took me as a servant. So now I dwell in the courts of the House of God, and am well content. I

was only anxious about you, my love, and little Benjamin. My good master, your dear father, is in Abraham's bosom. Now the Lord God has granted my daily prayer, and brought you hither." Thus the good old soul concluded her lengthy narrative.

"Now, love, get up at once and put on the white linen garments which are worn by the temple virgins. It will soon be time for the evening sacrifice, and you must be present with the others in the tribune. Afterwards you will go in to supper with them, and Phenenna, who is a kind mother to them all, will present you to your new companions. And let me advise you not to be annoyed if some of the haughty daughters of Sion look askance at the daughter of a Rabbi who comes from the idolatrous city of Antioch, and tease you by calling you a modern Debbora. For every one in the house knows that you entered Jerusalem this morning with Eleazar as his affianced bride; in fact that is how I heard about you."

Sara went on chattering, while Thamar was dressing. What she foretold came true to a great extent. Thamar met with many a proud and envious look, but she behaved in so simple and unassuming a manner, she was so modest and prudent, that she gained all hearts; many were eager to make friends with her, and some amongst her companions did not grudge her the hand of the proudest and most handsome warrior in Jerusalem, who in his glittering armor had so often been compared to Judas Machabeus.

That same evening Thamar was called down to the lodge, where her little brother was waiting. He jumped for joy and clapped his hands when he saw her, and cried out: "Is it you, Thamar really? But why have you got on that white tunic? I like you better in your blue dress. And why have they shut you up like a wild beast behind this grating?"

As soon as Thamar could get him to talk sensibly, she began to question him as to what he had overheard the brigands saying about Ben Caiaphas' part in the attack upon their father. She then for the first time perceived that they were not alone. A man advanced



out of a dark corner, and introduced himself as Ananus Ben Caiaphas. His beard was grey and curly, and his eyes had a peculiarly crafty expression.

"I did not wish to intrude upon the first pleasure of your meeting," he said, "but now I may perhaps present myself to my future daughter-in-law as Eleazar's father. My son has brought a blessing to his nation and his family, since he has made a conquest of arms for his people and a bride for himself. You are indeed fair as a rose, and I doubt not far too wise to give credence to the silly prattle of a child. How could you believe that I should ally myself with an assassin like Ben Gioras, or entertain the idea of betraying my relatives into his hands?"

Thamar looked at the speaker, and did not attempt to conceal the mistrust wherewith he inspired her. He avoided meeting her eye, and she said: "I heard from Eleazar's own lips, that you have frequent dealings with Ben Gioras. But I can scarcely conceive that a son of Abraham could be guilty of such treachery as Benjamin thinks he heard the Sheik Mardoch mention. Say, brother, were you not mistaken? The Sheik did not say such a thing of Ben Caiaphas?"

Benjamin looked very frightened, and said under his breath: "Please do not ask me about it, or he will shut me up again with his old father, who is possessed by an evil spirit."

"What are you whispering about?" inquired Ben Caiaphas, coming forward. "What is the boy saying about an evil spirit? You wait, my man, I will cure you of lying! Did you not promise me to hold your tongue about that rubbish—"

"I told Thamar nothing," interrupted the terrified child.

"Acknowledge that it was all a stupid blunder!"

"I did not promise to say that, I promised not to talk about it; I cannot tell a lie," said the boy, beginning to sob.

Thamar saw how matters stood, and came to her brother's help. She said she was sure there was a misunderstanding, and no further explanation was

necessary; then she asked about her father, and what property, in money and jewels, he had left.

As she expected, after a few formal sentences about the Rabbi's sad end, Ben Caiaphas launched out into invective against the Governor, who had escaped to Caesarea, taking with him the girl's dowry. He then drew from a fold of his cloak a document investing him with full powers to administer the whole property belonging to her and her brother, and detached a pen and inkhorn which he wore fastened to his leathern girdle, as do men of business in the East up to the present day. Handing the strip of papyrus and the pen ready dipped to Thamar, he said in his most insinuating manner: "It is a mere formality. Being your nearest relative I am as a matter of course your legal guardian."

But Thamar answered: "I should not be the wise maiden that you wish me to be were I just for form's sake, to put my name to a document of the contents of which I am in a great measure ignorant. Leave it with me and I will read it through by daylight tomorrow. Meanwhile my father has a confidential agent in Antioch with whom he will doubtless have left full instructions how to act. I have already acquainted him, some weeks ago, by means of trusty messengers, with what has occurred. If the war had not broken out in the interval, he would assuredly have been here before now. Good-bye; I shall see you again tomorrow."

Ben Caiaphas bit his lip. He took back the document and replaced the writing materials in his girdle, saying: "You are indeed extraordinarily cautious. It is really enough to make me angry with you, but we will not quarrel about the matter. Tomorrow I will bring you an official decree, constituting me the legal guardian of your brother and yourself. Farewell, and do not be over clever, remember the proverb; too sharp a sword cuts the scabbard."

"I shall come again tomorrow if I can," Benjamin cried. "I know the way now," he added as he reluctantly allowed Ben Caiaphas to lead him away.

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## CHAPTER 25.

### The Conquest of the Citadel.

The next day according to the Jewish calendar was the Feast of Wood<sup>1)</sup> (Xylophoria) a festival whereon it was customary for all the people of Israel to bring logs of wood to keep up the supply of fuel for the altar of burnt offering. From an early hour in the morning thousands streamed in through the gates; the levites and acolytes had enough to do to store away and pile up the logs in the spaces on each side of the Court of the Priests.

Shortly before the morning sacrifice Eleazar appeared on the scene, accompanied by a band of followers, bringing his contribution of wood. His eye ranged over the crowds of men standing in close ranks in the cloisters, and round the Nicanor gate. On all sides a sign of intelligence was exchanged with him. After depositing the wood he had brought, he joined the groups at the Nicanor gate.

At that juncture Menahem was seen approaching attired in royal garments, assuming the state of a king, surrounded by a party of his adherents. He pompously advanced to take his seat in the place of honor reserved for the four and twenty elders. Then Eleazar stepped in his way, and said: "How dare you enter here as if you were king of Jerusalem? Go back; put your peasant's tunic on again, it suits you far better than those royal robes, and bring your log of wood humbly. Otherwise, by the God of our fathers, the sanctity of this place shall not protect you against the reward of your insolence!"

Menahem was defiant, and his followers attempted to elbow a way for him to the seat of honor. A loud cry arose; Eleazar's men had brought swords hidden under their cloaks into the interior of the temple, where

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, Wars of the Jews II. 17, 6.

it was forbidden to carry even so much as a staff. At a sign from their leader the swords were drawn, and shouting: Death to the insolent! Eleazar and his party fell upon the unarmed Galileans. It was an unheard-of outrage. In vain the priests, who were preparing to offer the morning oblation, endeavored to prevent the profanation of the temple; the carnage was frightful, the blood of the hated Galileans crimsoned the hallowed spot.

Thamar had taken the place in the tribune among the consecrated virgins, and was gazing at the altar of burnt sacrifice and the veil concealing the Holy of holies, when her attention was attracted by the men trying to force a way through the crowd; almost immediately after she saw the gleam of the swords, and was appalled to behold a stream of blood that flowed over the white marble steps from the Court of Men. She and her companions joined in the cry of horror that went up to Heaven from a thousand voices, mingling with the anguished appeal for help uttered by the men who were so treacherously attacked. For a moment she closed her eyes; when she looked again, she saw Eleazar his armor sprinkled with blood, pursuing the unfortunate Menahem, and furiously striking down any one who got in his way. Then she retreated into the interior of the house, not venturing again to look into the temple courts, the marble pavement of which was covered with the bodies of the slain. Almost all the Galileans were put to death. Menahem contrived to make his escape; he fled to a place called Ophla; but that same day he was discovered and by Eleazar's command tortured and slain.

In this outrage Bishop Simeon recognized the "abomination of desolation in the holy place" predicted by our Lord, and immediately departed from Jerusalem, with the remainder of the Christians who were not compelled by circumstances to remain in the doomed city.

Eleazar now ruled in the temple without a rival. He forthwith took possession of the treasury, where more than a thousand talents of gold were stored, appropriating this sum for military purposes. A kind of syndicate, in which the party of the Zealots and the

*Sicarii* were represented, now assumed the management of the war, acknowledging Eleazar as chief in command.

Vested with this new dignity, he sought an interview with Thamar in the evening of the same day. But on his presenting himself at the house, Phenenna met him instead of Thamar, and loaded him with reproaches. How could he presume, she asked to re-enter the precincts of the temple, which he had defiled with blood, blood which cried to Heaven for vengeance more loudly than that of Abel. How could he cherish the hope that with a sword thus profaned, he could effect the deliverance of the people of God out of the hand of the enemy and defend the holy city and the temple. Saul of old had not sinned so grievously, yet the Lord rejected him. Thus the old woman spoke in holy zeal, hoping to induce her nephew to make atonement for his crime.

But Eleazar was not inclined to listen to her preaching. He interrupted her angrily, saying: "Of course I shall offer a sacrifice of expiation, and defray the expense of purifying the temple. But for the matter of that you know nothing about politics and warfare. We want no Galilean here either in the capacity of king or of general. However I have neither time nor inclination to listen to your pious exhortations; I came to see Rabbi Sadoe's daughter."

"Thamar declines to see you. She bids me tell you that she would rather celebrate her nuptials with death than with one who is guilty of assassination and sacrilege," Phenenna replied in a decided tone.

Eleazar turned pale with anger, and stamped his foot on the floor. "She shall have reason to rue that speech," he cried. "We shall see whether I can tame that wild cat! She shall beg my pardon on her knees; and when the Romans are conquered, I will compel her to marry me."

"You will not do so as long as she chooses to remain among the temple virgins. I shall protect her, and not suffer you to violate the sanctity of this house."

"You protect her indeed! We shall see how much your protection is worth," Eleazar scornfully retorted, as he flung out of the house.

The next day Eleazar began to storm the Antonia. After two days he took it, and put every one of the Roman garrison to death. From the roof of the temple the virgins could obtain a view of the terrible conflict, but in vain did Thamar's old nurse invite her to become a spectator of her lover's exploits.

Eleazar's splendid physique and his gilt armor had prejudiced Sara powerfully in his favor. She did, it is true, deplore the massacre of the Galileans, but that bloody deed did not hinder her from desiring to see her much-loved Thamar the wife of the handsomest and greatest man in Israel.

"You must accustom yourself to such things, my love," she said. "Eleazar is a man of the sword, not a man of peace. The Lord will give you fortitude such as Debhora and Judith possessed. David, the devout king, shed a great deal of blood. And you will see that ere long Eleazar will be king of Israel. Come and see how he is fighting the battle of the Lord against these heathen, the foremost of our warriors, and shout in applause, as the priests and levites do who are watching the battle from their own quarters."

Thamar only answered Sara's eulogium by saying: "I beg, Sara, that you will not go on talking to me about that man. I have no wish to be Queen of Israel, least of all as the consort of a man who makes his way to the throne by such criminal actions." And she went on quietly stitching at the vestment which she was making.

While she thus sat at needlework, the last conversation she had with Helena and Drusilla about the world-wide kingdom of peace recurred to her mind. What a different spirit pervaded that kingdom of the Messiah, as the slave depicted it, to that which animated these Jewish Zealots who imagined themselves to be serving the Lord when, in their anger and desire for revenge, they shed the blood of their adversaries and even of their own kindred. How petty and narrow in general was the spirit of Judaism, how hard it was! Only the children of Abraham after the flesh were chosen, and all nations were to serve them!

Thamar then remembered some passages from the

prophets, which spoke of a worship of the true God that was not to be restricted to Jerusalem, not celebrated in one temple alone, but which was to embrace the whole world. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise Him, all ye people!" And a clean oblation, no longer the bloody sacrifice of the Mosaic law, was to be offered to His name, "from the rising of the sun even to its going down," for "His name is great among the Gentiles," according to Malachias' prediction. How exactly that prophesy coincided with the description Helena gave of the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, and how utterly unlike it was to the Jewish conception of the kingdom the Messiah would establish!

Then it occurred to Thamar that Helena had also spoken of the presentation of the Lord in the temple, and of the prophesy of a venerable old man saying that the Messiah should be set for the fall of many in Israel, and that a sword should pierce the soul of His mother. Involuntarily she turned her eyes in the direction of the gate where the first-born were presented to the Lord. Only on the preceding day she had heard the wailing of the infants, whom the priest took in his arms, and held them on high, looking toward the Holy of holies, while the parents ransomed them with the appointed sacrifice.

Then her thoughts reverted to and dwelt on the Mother, whose soul was to be pierced by a sword of sorrow. How terribly that prediction was fulfilled when she stood beneath the cross of Him whom Helena worshipped as the Messiah. These thoughts engrossed her mind more and more, as the needle obeyed her deft fingers. The marvellous destiny of a mother, whose Son was at once both God and man, and who, crucified by His own nation, was to redeem the world by His death, took vivid shape before her mental vision. And almost unconsciously to herself her heart softened with a feeling of veneration, of tender affection towards that one, the most highly-favored of her sex. She remembered the picture she saw at Bethania, and within herself she prayed: "O daughter of David, whose lot was at once the most glorious and the most terrible, pray for me and for my brother that we may be brought into the

kingdom of thy Son, if indeed that Son is in very truth the Messiah."

Another idea struck Thamar; Helena had spoken of an aged woman named Anna and—yes, she was right—the mother of Jesus was said to have been brought up among the virgins in the temple! Possibly some reminiscences of her lingered among the older sisters; Phenenna, who was very aged, would know something about her. Thamar resolved to ask her about this at the very first opportunity. At any rate she would be acquainted with the extraordinary occurrences which were alleged to have taken place in the temple at the time of Jesus' death.

The opportunity for a quiet conversation with Phenenna was however not so easily found. Events followed one another in Jerusalem in rapid succession. After the capture of the Antonia, whereby the Zealots obtained entire possession of the hill on which the temple stood, Eleazar proceeded to storm the Xyst, the old Asmonean castle and Agrippa's palace, all of these being plundered and burnt down. The next step was to set fire to the public treasury, where the archives were deposited and the bonds of creditors were registered; this gave great delight to Ben Caiaphas, and many others, who thus saw themselves freed from the obligation to pay their debts. Berenice's palace was then pillaged and burnt, as well as the residences of the principal members of the Council who were suspected of Roman proclivities, that is, were desirous to keep at peace with Rome. The Herodian troops, defeated on all sides, fled out of the city, and many citizens of power and influence went with them. Others took refuge in the Upper Palace, to their ultimate destruction, as this was the next building attacked by Eleazar.

On the day when the first assault was made, Benjamin surreptitiously paid a visit to his sister in the temple. "I cannot stay long," he said to her, "Because if Ben Caiaphas found out I had come here, he would shut me up of a certainty with his father, who is possessed. I can tell you, I have no mind to spend the night in his company."



Then the child told his sister what the maniac had said about Jesus of Nazareth and His coming again in the clouds of heaven. "He was High-Priest at the time, and he had Him crucified; now he fancies that the man he crucified rose again from the dead, though we know better, our father told us that was untrue. What do you say to that, Thamar? The wretched old man's eyes glow like red-hot embers, when he talks about the Nazarite whom he says was innocent, and declares that he himself will be damned in hell forever. It is horrible to see and hear him!"

Thamar replied that it was a dreadful thing to have the life of an innocent man on one's conscience, and that it was quite possible that their father might have been mistaken as to the guilt of Jesus of Nazareth. She said they must both pray that the truth might be revealed to them. She then asked him how he liked being in Caiaphas' house.

"Better than I did at first," Benjamin answered. "Since the house was burnt down in which the debtors' bonds were kept, and Eleazar had gained such grand victories, Ben Caiaphas has been in a better temper, and has not beaten me, as he did the other day, when I would not say what he wanted me to do. But I cannot tell a lie! Then there is Nathaniel, Eleazar's younger brother, who is a capital fellow; I play with him, and practice with the sling. I can sling stones now nearly as well as David did when he was a boy. Tomorrow we are going, Nathaniel and I, with Eleazar to the palace which is to be attacked, to sling stones at the Romans if they show themselves on the walls."

Thamar wanted to forbid him, but he declared that she knew nothing about it; she was only a girl and he was a boy, and must fight in Israel's defence. "I have a great bag full of smooth stones," he continued. "I shall let fly at the Romans' heads as David did at Goliath's. Only I shall not touch the handsome Centurion who came to our assistance on his white horse. I knew him again directly when I saw him at the gate, so did Eleazar, for he threatened to take his life. But I mean to speak to Eleazar, and ask him to do him no harm."

In this resolve Thamar encouraged her brother, and they parted. She went to her chamber with a heavy heart, for she was alarmed to hear that Lucius Flavus was still in Jerusalem, and she prayed that her generous rescuer might be spared the fate which seemed inevitable.

On the following day Eleazar actually attacked the palace, and assaulted the walls in four different places. The Jews in their blind fury attempted to scale them, but the Roman soldiers shot darts at them, and drove them back wounded. The Jews lacked proper instruments for the siege, consequently they had to resort to the slow and toilsome process of digging a mine from a great distance to undermine the walls and thus cause them to fall. Before the use of explosives was known, the plan of undermining was the ordinary means employed; a trench was dug below the foundations, which were propped up with strong beams, the earth that was removed being replaced by combustibles, which when ignited set fire to the beams, and the supports giving way, the masonry fell suddenly. In this manner the massive fortifications and towers were overthrown, after having defied the blows of battering rams.

Metilius, to whom Florus had given the command of the forces, said with a smile to Lysias and Lucius, after the first assailants had been driven back: "They will not hazard a second attempt. I reckon they have lost a thousand men." He had released from confinement the two officers to whom he spoke, immediately after the Governor's departure.

"They fought very bravely, almost with foolhardiness," Lucius replied. "I expect the war with the Jews will involve more bloodshed than Florus imagines."

"First of all they must provide themselves with engines for the siege if they attempt to storm us again, or they will drive a mine," Lysias remarked.

"I wish them joy of it!" Metilius exclaimed. "Long before they can bring a pent-house up to the walls, or dig their mine half way, Florus will have returned with succour."

"If he were in danger, the legions would be already at the gates. But I greatly fear he will leave us in the

lurch. He lighted the fire here and himself fled to a safe distance," Lysias said.

"If that were really the case, there would be no alternative for us but to surrender," Metilius said with alarm depicted on his countenance.

"We surrender—Romans surrender to Jews! Never!" Lucius exclaimed. "Romans die at their post. I do not count upon relief from Florus, but Cestius Gallus will not leave us without succour. It may be some weeks before he can assemble a sufficient body of troops. But whether he comes or no, we will remain every man at his post like the valiant garrison of Antonia."

The watchmen on the highest watchtower of Phasaelus looked in vain day after day and week after week towards the heights of Scopus to the north, where reinforcements from Caesarea or Antioch would first come into sight. Meanwhile the Jews carried on their excavations, the subterranean gallery reached as far as the walls. They were heard at this work, and the tribune, who was well versed in military matters, was able to indicate with precision the part of the wall that was undermined. "We have yet time," he said, "to build up another wall within, and thus close the breach before it is made. Before they have undermined that, Gallus will have come up to our relief with his army."

The soldiers all set cheerfully to work and under Lysias' direction another wall, several feet in width, was constructed within the other. The Jews who had taken refuge in the stronghold helped vigorously in the work, for they felt little doubt that if they fell into Eleazar's hands, no quarter would be given them. Even Ananias the High-Priest, and Ezechias, his predecessor in the sacerdotal office, carried stones in the sweat of their brow, and repeatedly inquired whether the watchmen on the battlements of the Phasael did not yet desecry succour on its way. But in vain was their anxious gaze fixed on Mount Scopus.

The new wall at which the besieged worked day and night, had already reached the height of more than thirty feet, when the other fell suddenly, sooner than was expected, with a tremendous noise, burying a number

of soldiers under its ruins. Before the cloud of dust that arose was dispersed, Eleazar with a company of picked men appeared in the breach. Lucius Flavus with a division of the cohorts stood on the newly-erected barrier. They had still been busily at work on it when the crash caused by the fall of the other startled them. Recovering themselves in a moment, they hastily took up their arms, which lay beside them in readiness, and received Eleazar's charge with a shower of stones and darts. The latter, to their intense mortification, were compelled to beat a hasty retreat. Eleazar recognized the Centurion as the one who had thus turned the hoped-for victory into a defeat, and his hatred towards his rival knew no bounds.

However the destruction of the wall greatly discouraged the troops, who believed that Florus had betrayed them and abandoned them to their fate. If the first wall, they argued, with its deep, firm foundations was thus easily overthrown, what protection would the second afford, erected as it was in haste, almost without foundations? Moreover the soldiers perceived that Metilius their commander wavered, and they called on him to make terms with the Jews for an honorable retreat. In vain Claudius Lysias and Lucius Flavus endeavored to dissuade him from this step; in vain the High-Priest and his companions begged that they might not be delivered up to the fury of their fellow-countrymen, Metilius, finding he could no longer hold out, agreed to surrender, on condition that his men should lay down their arms and march out unhurt. Three of the Jewish commanders accepted these terms; but no sooner had the Romans laid down their swords and shields, and were drawn up in ranks on the square before the citadel, than the perfidious Jews encompassed them, fell upon them, and began to cut them down without mercy.<sup>1)</sup>

A cry of horror and indignation rose from the lips of the men who were treated with such shameless treachery. "You swore by the gods to spare our lives," Metilius shouted.

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<sup>1)</sup> Josephus *loc. cit.* II. 17, 10.

"By your gods!" the Jews retorted. "Such an oath is nothing to us. We have sworn by our God that not one of you shall escape alive, unless he consents to embrace our creed and be circumcised."

"We will not join your perjured nation. The gods will avenge us," the Romans said. They were all barbarously murdered to a man.

Eleazar had given orders that the officers should be kept apart, in the guard-room at the gate. He now entered the room, and, his sword drawn, declared they should all be despatched to Hades, unless they would embrace the Jewish faith. The cowardly, effeminate Metilius fell on his knees and entreated for mercy, promising to turn Jew and be circumcised. All his comrades cried shame on him, and Eleazar said contemptuously: "I should not have expected that of a Roman."

"He is a dastardly Asiatic and has Punic or perhaps Jewish blood in his veins," Lucius remarked. "For my part I would rather die a thousand times than stoop to such ignominy."

"I will compel you," said Eleazar, addressing the Centurion, "since you choose death, to drain the cup of ignominy first and then the chalice of death, drop by drop. I have a private account to settle with you." So saying he gave orders that the Centurion should be bound and taken to his house.

"Farewell," Claudius cried, grasping the hand of his young friend. "Think over the truths that we discussed together, and may the God of truth enlighten and guide you! How glad I am that I die a Christian!"

Eleazar caught these last words. "What, you are a Nazarite?" he said to the tribune. "Then you doubly deserve death. Away with you, unless you consent to abjure this creed which is more odious to me than that of the heathen."

"I will joyfully die for Him who died for my sake," Lysias calmly replied.

Eleazar gave the command, and Lucius saw his friend and counsellor fall lifeless to the ground. He was then conducted in fetters to Caiaphas' house.

## CHAPTER 26.

### Thamar's Heroic Courage.

In the evening of the same day Eleazar repaired to the dwelling of the Temple virgins, and asked for an interview with Thamar. Phenenna came in her place, and said that the Rabbi's daughter again declined to see him. The old woman wished besides to expostulate with her kinsman on account of his execrable barbarity. "I am told that you not only put all the Romans, but also the High-Priests and members of the Council to death," she said.

"And quite right too that our people in their zeal for the Lord should fall upon them and stone them!" Eleazar rejoined. "What business had they to ally themselves with the enemies of His name? There are still some of their confederates in the city, they too must be put to death. For until we are all of one mind, we shall never defeat the Romans who are now advancing against us. But I did not come here to dispute with you about matters which you cannot understand. Send this strip of papyrus to Sadoc's daughter. If she still refuses to speak to me, she will know what to expect."

On the papyrus these words were inscribed: "Eleazar to the beautiful Thamar, whom he chose for his bride. Know, O thou rose of Antioch, that I intend to gather thee, although thy thorns may prick me, for thy fragrance is sweet in my nostrils, and thy form is fair to my eyes. The Roman who stretched out his hand to pluck thee, is in my power; I have him in my house under safe custody. And by the God of my fathers! he shall die in torture, such as Antiochus inflicted on the Machabees, if thou wilt not recognize me as thy affianced husband, me, whom thou art pleased to term a murderer and sacrilegious, but who am in reality Israel's victorious champion. The choice is left to thee; I await thy decision."

Deadly terror seized upon Thamar when she read these lines. She hastened down to the lodge, to endeavor by her prayers and tears to move Eleazar to pity. The stern man listened to her entreaties and gloated over the grief of the unhappy girl. That was the first instalment of the debt she owed him for the bitter words she had flung in his teeth. And the more plainly he read in her eyes the anxiety she felt lest the Roman should be put to death, the more fiercely did the fire of jealousy consume his heart. "She would not have wasted many words for me," he said to himself.

Thamar went so far as to ask Eleazar's forgiveness on her knees: "I spoke in a moment of excitement, and did not sufficiently consider my words," she said. "I believe that you are convinced that all you do is for Israel's weal and lawful and allowed, although I cannot see it. At any rate, have mercy on me and spare this man's life for my sake, he was so good to my father and me."

"I am to spare his life that you may marry him," Eleazar answered scornfully.

"I swear that I will never espouse a heathen!"

"Very likely he will let himself be circumcised, like that coward Metilius, for love of your fair face, although he protested that he would rather die than profess our creed."

"Even if he became one of ourselves for my sake, I swear that I would never give him my hand."

"Yet you will not be my bride?"

"Be generous! This is not the way to woo a maiden! Remember at Masada how generously you behaved. You then said you would never compel me to enter your father's house as your betrothed, if he had instigated my father's death. You know now that unhappily that is only too true. You see then, when I perceived, or thought that I perceived you to be magnanimous, I began to think that I could love you, and in accordance with the requirements of the law I might become your wife. And if I see that you conquer your passion, I may perhaps eventually be united to you. Otherwise I would rather die, God knows that I would!"

"Do you imagine that you can make me your slave by such a 'perhaps'? Do you suppose I do not see the way of escape that you reserve for yourself. Magnanimous or not, you shall have me for your spouse! I give you till tomorrow morning to make up your mind, then you must answer yes or no, without ifs and buts. And your "no" will mean death to the Roman."

With these words Eleazar departed. Thamar staggered back to her chamber with a sorrowful heart. "He will be as good as his word; bloodthirsty tyrant that he is, he will certainly kill him, if I do not accept him for my husband. Can I, ought I to make such a sacrifice for the sake of a stranger? It would cost me less to lay down my life. O holy Virgin, who didst once inhabit this house, look in pity on the anguish of my soul, and suggest to me some means whereby I can save the Roman from a cruel death, and myself escape the horrible alternative of becoming the spouse of this hard-hearted, barbarous man." Thus Thamar prayed in her inmost heart. During the days of the siege she had often prayed for Lucius, and now the fact that he had not shared the fate of his comrades seemed at least in part an answer to her prayers. She must find some way of rescuing him. But though she thought and thought, no feasible plan suggested itself to her mind.

Presently Sara came in and asked if she would like to see the burning of the royal palace from the roof of the temple. For after the splendid edifice had been looted by the populace, it had been set on fire on all four sides, and the flames were then flaring up to the heavens. In order to please the old woman Thamar went up with her to the roof and gazed awhile at the magnificent though fearful spectacle. The flames poured out of the windows and united in one vast volume of fire, scattering sparks as it went up on high. All over the city the crackling of the flames could be heard, and the crash of the falling timbers. In the rear of the burning palace the towers of Hippicus, Phasaël and Mariamne stood out like fiery giants, the whole city and the dark vault of heaven seemed enveloped in the red glow, and the golden pinnacles of the temple reflected the light as if the devouring element had even reached their lofty height.



"Look how all the women have come out on the roof! All Jerusalem is looking on at this huge conflagration," Sara remarked.

At that moment an idea struck Thamar: if it were possible at any time to attempt the rescue of the Centurion, now would be the time when everyone's attention was directed to the fire. She laid her hand on her nurse's arm, and led her, all unwillingly, back to her chamber.

"We ought to have stayed a little longer," the woman expostulated, "at any rate till the roof fell in; then the sparks would have flown as high again."

"That is quite true. You shall see it from a nearer spot. Quick, fetch me a dark mantle, and come with me to Caiaphas' house, you will see it all better there."

"Now? Go there in the middle of the night? What are you thinking of? Phenenna would turn us both out of the house if she heard of such an escapade, though you are such a favorite of hers. You know how strictly the temple virgins are forbidden to leave the house."

"She shall never know it, Sara. She went to her room long ago, and the others are all on the roof. Be kind and fetch me a mantle!"

What was there that the good nurse would not let Thamar persuade her to do? If her darling had insisted upon it, she would have followed her into the burning palace. Off she went therefore, though not without a sigh, to fetch the desired cloak. Thamar did not feel quite as confident concerning her rash undertaking as she gave herself out to be. If Phenenna alone discovered it, she hoped to be able to justify herself, but if others became aware of so gross a violation of the rules of the house, she would have to submit to a severe punishment and perhaps be expelled ignominiously. In that case whither could she turn her steps?

On the other hand it was a question of at least attempting to save a fellow-creature's life, and that the life of a man she dearly loved. Never had she felt so drawn towards him as now that he was in such imminent peril. "If I am the means of rescuing him, it will not be for myself," she said. "He must return to his

own country, to his sister, who, he once told me, resembles me. Never again shall I see his kind face, but it will be a consolation to me to think that I saved him from that brute. I will make the attempt, even if it should cost me my life."

Benjamin had described Caiaphas' house and especially the prison where he had been shut up with the demented old man so elaborately to Thamar, that she had formed a very accurate idea of it. He had also told her of the way of ingress through the half-ruined wing of the building. She hoped to find him, if she could only get through the gate and across the courtyard without being observed. But that seemed an impossibility; besides how could the prisoner be conducted out of the court without attracting attention? And where in the town could he be concealed?

A man would never in the face of so many obstacles, have ventured to make the attempt, which only a series of the most fortunate coincidences could render successful. But a woman's heart is more daring. Somehow Thamar felt she must succeed; she had prayed earnestly, and surely God would come to her aid in some way. So hoping against hope, she wrapped herself in the cloak which Sara brought, and said: "Now come, show me the way through the rooms where the priests' vestments are washed, there is a little door there through which we can get into the place where the wood is stacked, and thence, I hope, into the open air."

A few minutes later the two figures closely muffled might be seen gliding in the shade of the temple wall and over the outer court towards the bridge which led into the city. A sentry was posted there, and the two women had almost turned back. "Women out at this time!" the man said. "I thought the gate of the temple was closed long ago. But it is a good thing that some of you should be diligent in prayer for Israel's salvation. Bad times are near at hand. Look up there at the sign which the Lord has set in the heavens."

They looked in the direction indicated, and over the Mount of Olives they beheld a comet resembling in form a flaming sword. Sara shrieked with alarm.

"I have only just seen it, and pointed it out to the Captain who came round to relieve guard," the sentry said. "He thought it was a good omen, predicting the downfall of the Roman power. I hope he may prove right. Go in peace and perform your orisons!"

In the west the flames of the burning palace cast a lurid glare over the city, in the eastern sky the ominous portent shone brightly. Thamar hurried onward, intent on the execution of her more than hazardous project.

Until then she had kept her companion in ignorance of the real aim of their nocturnal expedition. Now she informed her that they would presently get a nearer view of the conflagration, but that first she must go to Caiaphas' house, as she had something urgent to communicate to her brother. She could not stop, she said, to explain everything then; later on Sara should know all, and she would undoubtedly approve what was to be done. As she had frequently been sent to Caiaphas' house with messages to Benjamin, so she must know the way, and besides be no stranger to the porter. Somewhat sullenly Sara complied with this apparently unaccountable freak on the part of her usually prudent mistress, and they passed without misadventure through the narrow streets—still full of people notwithstanding the lateness of the hour—and reached the house of Caiaphas.

On the square in front there was a continual coming and going. Some of the people stood in groups, talking of the conflagration that lit up the streets with a ruddy glow, or of the comet, at which more and more persons were staring in vague alarm. At this juncture a fresh party came down from the Upper Market, crying: "Have you heard the news? It is said that Cestius Gallus is advancing on the city with an immense army?"

"Oh, nothing so very wonderful," another man answered. "Some twenty or thirty thousand men, not more. We can oppose them with twice the number, and Eleazar our general will annihilate them at one stroke."

"That will be a rather difficult task," another citizen said. "The Roman warriors are of a different mettle to our neighbors the Samaritans. But look, here comes our valiant commander."

"All hail Eleazar! All hail, the champion of our nation!" the people cried, as they made way for their leader, who now rode out of the gateway of his house, accompanied by a few men on horseback.

Thamar, who caught these words just as she was crossing the square, had barely time to slip aside into the dark shadow projected by the wall. Standing there, she heard Eleazar exhort the towns-people to keep a good heart and under the direction of their officers practise themselves in military exercises assiduously during the next few days. He was going in person to reconnoitre, and would return in good time to lead them to battle and victory. "God is with us," he exclaimed. "He delivered the citadel into our hands at the right moment, and even now He shows us His sword in the heavens threatening the Romans with swift destruction." Then amid shouts of applause, he galloped off down the street.

Thamar hesitated for a moment as to what course she should pursue. For the present there was nothing to be feared for the Centurion. On the other hand she must make use of the time before Eleazar's return, and that night, when there was so much commotion in the city, seemed favorable for her project. Looking up, she saw standing at the gate, the doors of which were being closed, a boy, looking after Eleazar as he rode away. His back was towards her, and taking him for Benjamin, she hastened up to him, and addressed him as her brother. The boy turned and looked at her with surprise, asking who she was? and Thamar, in some confusion, drew back with an apology. But the boy said in a pleasant manner, "Why, you must surely be Benjamin's sister about whom he has told me so much! You have been out to the fire? I wanted to go with Benjamin to the citadel, but Eleazar and my father would not hear of it."

His father! Thamar had forgotten all about Ben Caiaphas. How could she venture to intrude into that man's house? And now that this lad had recognized her she would be charged with having helped the Centurion to escape, if he really did escape. If she could

have got back to the temple without being recognized, no suspicion would have rested on her. Never mind! The mere fact that she had been seen at night at a considerable distance from the temple, would get her into sufficient trouble. She could not now go back, she must go on.

These thoughts passed swiftly through her mind, and in a kind of desperation she asked the boy whether his father were at home?

"Yes, certainly. Shall I call him or shall I conduct you to him?"

"Neither, good Nathaniel, I do not want to see him, but my brother. And I should be very glad if you could manage not to let your father know of my coming. You see, I had a little difference once with your father, and—"

"I know," Nathaniel answered, for he entertained little respect for his father. "I know, Father quarrels with almost every one. He shall not know you are here. Come into the old Council chamber, I will send Benjamin to you, and keep watch outside, lest he should disturb you. Benjamin is a capital hand at hiding, and if I whistle, he will put you somewhere where Father will never find you."

Thamar made a sign to Sara to wait in the shadow of the wall, and with a beating heart passed under the gateway. The spacious courtyard was completely illuminated by the fire. The boy therefore guided her carefully, keeping alongside of the wall, to the Court of Justice, and bade her sit down on the broken pillar, till her brother came.

So far, so good. Thamar's courage rose; her prayers had not been in vain, and she renewed her supplications with fresh confidence.

Presently Benjamin made his appearance. In a few words she told him what she wanted him to do. But she found to her distress, that the child had not the courage to go down alone at night to the subterranean vaults. The terror he had experienced when shut up with the maniac was too fresh in his memory. "I have always been told that evil spirits have more power at

night than by day. The possessed old man would tear me to pieces. When I was out on the roof looking at the fire I heard him howling worse than ever," Benjamin said.

"But the kind Centurion, who rescued Father and me out of the robber's hands will not be imprisoned with the maniac!"

"Yes he will. There is no other dungeon down there that can be locked."

"Then I will come with you. Show me the way."

"But we have no light. In the daytime I could hardly venture to go down the steps that take down to the vaults, they are falling to pieces."

"We can manage it, it must be managed somehow! The fire makes every place as bright as day; if there is any light in the daytime we can find our way now."

"Well come then. But I tell you, I am not going into the dungeon where that devil is. You must do that."

"I thought you were a brave boy, Benjamin."

"I am brave, but not when one comes to evil spirits! If I were a coward, I should not have come here now, for Ben Caiaphas will beat the life out of me, if he finds I have played him a trick, or perhaps shut me up with the madman. Come on then."

Benjamin led his sister behind the tribune, now half delapidated, on which the judge had been seated when he pronounced sentence on Jesus. It was pitch dark. Holding Tamar's hand, the boy groped his way round the corner, to where the flight of steps began. "Take care," he said. "I have found the first step. We had best go down backwards, on hands and knees."

"This will never do," Tamar said. She began to feel uneasy in this strange place, in complete darkness. "Would it not be better for you to run back to the house and fetch an oil lamp?"

"Just now you said: We must go and we will go; now it is for me to say it. I could not possibly fetch a lamp, we should be found out directly. I must creep down first and put your feet on the steps. So. There are two steps gone here in the middle. Now—oh dear! I nearly fell down! You must put your foot further, how

awkward girls are! There now! (At this moment they both slipped down several steps.) Have you hurt yourself much? I have hurt my shoulder, you fell on it."

Thamar tried to get up, saying: "I think I have sprained my left wrist. But that does not matter; have we got to the bottom?"

"Yes we have. Do just hear how the maniac is raving! I really think our wisest plan would be to clamber up again. I never heard him raving so violently."

Thamar trembled like an aspen leaf. But she pulled herself together and said: "Courage, Benjamin! The holy Angels will protect us." She then walked on boldly to the end of a long vaulted passage, her brother following reluctantly. A few small apertures in the roof admitted here and there a faint ray of light; besides her eyes were growing somewhat accustomed to the darkness. Thus they reached the door of the dungeon, and knocked at it.

Since he was taken prisoner Lucius Flavus had had a bad time. Eleazar had told him frankly that a terrible death was in store for him, because he had dared to make love to a daughter of Israel whom he himself, the leader and future ruler of his people, had chosen for his bride. The Roman was too proud either to deny or ask pardon for his admiration for Thamar. On the contrary, he told Eleazar to his face that he pitied the girl, if she was destined to be the spouse of a Jew who had been guilty of such an egregious breach of faith. At this Eleazar was within an ace of running him through with his sword, but he restrained his anger for the sake of taking more vengeance.

"You made arrangements for placing the property of the Rabbi Sadoc at Antioch under the trusteeship of the Roman authorities. You must immediately sign this letter to the Legate asking him to reverse that order." Thus he rudely bade the Centurion, not knowing that it was Berenice, not Lucius, who had caused that step to be taken. Lucius did not undeceive Eleazar; he allowed him to think it was his doing, and answered scornfully that he was only too glad to think that the maiden's fortune was secured from the greed of her unworthy suitor.

Upon that Eleazar had his hands fastened behind his back, and ordered him to be thrust into the cell where Caiaphas was incarcerated, saying: "Perhaps by tomorrow you will come to a better mind. Otherwise I swear you shall taste such tortures that you will beg to be killed outright as a favor."

In fact the hours spent in the maniac's company were awful, especially when night closed in, and the glare of the flames hard by was reflected on the walls of the dungeon. "Now the Nazarite is coming to judgment in the clouds of heaven! He has already opened the mouth of hell, see how its flames redden the sky! I shall be cast into the red-hot furnace. Here come the devils to fetch me, they are already at the door." In this way the old man went on raving, till Lucius really thought he would lose his reason too, if he were exposed to this all night long.

The noise Caiaphas said he heard at the door was not imaginary, as Lucius soon perceived. The bolts were shaken, and a woman's voice, a voice he instantly recognized, whispered: "Courage, Centurion, keep up your heart; with the help of God we will set you free."

"Is this the Rabbi's daughter!" Lucius cried.

"Yes, I am here. But for heaven's sake, Benjamin, the bolts will not draw back!"

"Giezi must have locked them with the key which hangs behind the door in his chamber. I shall have to go and fetch it," Benjamin answered dolefully. "Shall you mind waiting here alone at the door? I must go up the steps into the house, and you cannot go there with me."

"I will wait here. You run, and God grant you may find the keys!"

The boy went on this errand. Meanwhile Lucius had come close up to the door, and by throwing himself against it with all his force, endeavored to break it open. But the hinges were too strong, his efforts were fruitless. Then he said: "I am sorely afraid, O daughter of Sadoc, that your generous exertions will bring you into an evil case, and of a truth, my life would be purchased too dearly at the cost of your good name or your happiness. Leave me to my fate. What you have already done has



not been done in vain; you can at least have the satisfaction of saying to yourself: "I have given a man doomed to death the sweetest consolation he could have. And if you will allow me, I would fain give you two pieces of advice: Choose to die as a noble Roman lady should die rather than marry that man Eleazar. By all the gods it is not jealousy that prompts me to beg this of you, though I love you with my whole soul, it is my anxiety for your welfare. Will you promise me this?"

"I promise never to become his wife of my own free will. But I cannot I dare not take my own life, that is contrary to the law of our God. What is your second request?"

"I want you to send my farewell greeting to my mother and sister. The epistle will reach them if it is addressed: To the noble matron Lucina, in the Appian Way, Rome. Tell them, I thought of them with affection in my last hours. Only say in a general way that I died the death of a brave soldier, they must not know in what a miserable way I ended my days, they would never get over it. Tell them that I look forward to meeting them again in a better life—no, do not say anything about that. Would that one could know something for certain! It would be the greatest solace in the hour of death. What do you think about it? The Jews believe in a future life, if I am not mistaken. If so, I cannot understand how a man can commit such a crime as this unhappy creature in here, not to speak of his son and grandson!"

"O Lucius, I believe in the resurrection of the dead and a life everlasting! I believe that Jesus of Nazareth rose again, and opened to us the door of heaven which was closed against us by our sin. As soon as I can I mean to be baptized. Would that you too could believe and at least desire baptism, if you have no opportunity of receiving it, it would be your eternal salvation!"

"Just like Lysias, who died this very day with the profession of that faith upon his lips. Never shall I forget the happy expression of his countenance as he fell beneath the stroke," Lucius murmured to himself. Then raising his voice he urged Thamar not to expose

herself any longer to danger; but she answered that she must at any rate wait until her little brother returned, and again she tried to persuade him to renounce the tenets of paganism and embrace the christian faith.

Presently Benjamin came back, with all the speed possible, considering the darkness. "I have got it," he panted, being quite out of breath. "Only we must be quick. Giezi is coming after me. I knocked the lamp out of his hand, so that he had to go back to fetch another, otherwise he would have overtaken me by this time. Where is the key-hole? Here it is. Dear, dear, I cannot turn the key. You try, Thamar."

Thamar exerted all her strength, but she could not turn the lock. "Try turning it to the left!" Lucius cried, in the intensest anxiety; he knew every moment was precious, that every moment increased the jeopardy not only for himself but for those who ran so great a risk for his sake. At last the heavy bolts sprang back, the iron bars dropped, and Thamar entered the dungeon.

While she had been struggling with the lock, her mantle had slipped from her shoulders, and in the dim reflection of the light which the flames cast on the wall of the dark prison she bore the appearance of an angel. Caiaphas fell on his knees, crying out: "This is the messenger the Nazarite has sent! This is one of the spirits that stand around His throne on the clouds of Heaven! I shall be dragged before His judgment-seat and condemned to everlasting perdition. Woe betide me!"

"Repent of your sin, unhappy man, and Jesus, who died for the transgressions of mankind will forgive you," said Thamar, as with eager hands she untied the cords wherewith Lucius' arms were bound.

But the name of Jesus excited Caiaphas afresh, and again he began to shriek: "Crucify Him! His blood be on us!"

"Come away, I cannot bear to hear it!" cried Benjamin, putting both hands to his ears. "Do come, Giezi will be here in a minute."

All three hurried through the gloomy passage and scrambled as best they could up the ruined flight of steps. When they reached the top, they bolted the

trap-door, for they heard Giezi below shouting and swearing. Benjamin said he must have gone round by a longer way through the other house.

"That will give us time to escape. Centurion, wrap this cloak round you that you may not be instantly recognized as a Roman," Thamar said.

"Whither am I to go? I know not a soul in the whole town, now that my comrades are slain and Berenice has gone away!"

"Come with me," Benjamin cried. "I know a house close by where there are very kind people. I must get out of the way as well as you, for if Eleazar caught me, he would beat me to death. You must come too, Thamar, the porter will certainly not let you out."

There was no time for deliberation. Lucius and Thamar followed the boy, who led them round the ruined wing, to a place where a few steps enabled them to reach the top of the wall that enclosed the courtyard. From thence Benjamin pointed out to them the House of Mary, which on that side was only separated by the length of two or three gardens from Caiaphas' residence. "Nathaniel and I have often been there," he explained. "I know Paulinus, who lives there, he gave us figs and showed me his doves. We must jump down here. It is not very high, and the earth is soft. Come on."

Thereupon the boy let himself drop on the other side of the wall. Thamar hesitated. "I cannot jump so far, I think I would rather try to slip through the gate," she said to Lucius.

"You cannot do that. Hear what a noise they are making in the courtyard. We must venture. Give me your hand, we will both jump at once."

Thamar did as she was told, and fell prostrate. "Have you hurt yourself?" Lucius inquired, as he lifted her to her feet.

"Not very much," she replied, biting her lips to suppress a cry of pain. "Only my right foot—oh, I am afraid the bone is broken. I cannot walk. For heaven's sake leave me here and escape with Benjamin."

Then the strong man took her up in his arms like a child and with rapid steps he followed the boy who sped

on before him. Several other garden walls had to be scaled, which somewhat retarded the flight of the fugitives, but happily the walls were not high, and without further accident Lucius with his burden presently reached the little house, where he found Benjamin already knocking at the garden gate, and calling loudly for his friend Paulinus.

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## CHAPTER 27.

### Amongst Christians.

At last Paulinus and Rhode both came and asked what was the matter.

"Pray open the door, Paulinus. They will kill us if they take us," Benjamin entreated; and Thamar added: "Take pity on us. You will be saving the life of an innocent man."

No more was wanted. Here was an occasion when the precept of charity to one's neighbors was to be fulfilled, and Paulinus accordingly unfastened the door immediately. A few words sufficed to explain the situation. To harbor a fugitive Roman was undoubtedly a perilous matter, but no prudential considerations were allowed to have any weight in opposition to the commandment of fraternal charity, which our Lord designated as "His own commandment." Paulinus therefore offered the Centurion to share his modest chamber, and a shake-down was also arranged there for Benjamin. Rhode prepared a couch for Thamar, and put wet bandages round the injured ankle. "Tomorrow morning we will send for Eusebius, who is a very skilful surgeon, and he will set all right again. Meanwhile do not worry yourself about it, dear child," the servant said to the patient, gentle maiden, for whom she already felt a strong predilection.

Thamar promised to lie perfectly still. "But," she added, "there is one service I must ask of you. My old nurse Sara is waiting for me outside Caiaphas' house, and she will be terribly frightened at my non-appearance. She will not dare to go back to the temple without me. Could you send someone to fetch her? If you could take her in for this one night only, we could see about providing for her somewhere else tomorrow."

"O goodness! However can that be managed! I can not possibly go out into the streets now and leave the door open behind me," Rhode exclaimed.

"Pray do!" Thamar entreated. "Put me down by the door while you are away. My good angel, who has rendered me many a service tonight, will help me to keep guard."

Thamar's pleading was irresistible. Rhode threw the dark cloak round her and away she went. She succeeded in finding Sara, and brought her to the little house. It was a long time before the good woman's complaints and lamentations could be silenced; even then she would not hear of going to sleep, but sat down by Thamar's side to bathe her injured foot.

The next morning there was a great deal to be discussed and decided. Lucius and Benjamin were provisionally hidden in an outhouse. The boy thought this very amusing at first, but he soon tired of not being allowed to enter the house or go out into the garden, though the Centurion did his best to entertain him with an account of Rome and stories from Roman history. Benjamin on his part depicted to his friend the exploits of Israel's sons in glowing colors.

Paulinus naturally told his mother that same night about the arrival of the fugitives. She, poor woman was confined to her bed since she had the stroke, and thus had the opportunity of meriting a rich reward by her patience. In the morning she sent him with a kind message of welcome to Thamar, who entreated, but entreated in vain, to be conducted to the sick-bed of her charitable hostess, that she might thank her in person for the hospitality extended to her. Sara had to go in her place, and the old woman stayed a long time with the invalid, for when once she began to dilate on the estimable qualities of her nursling she did not know how to stop.

When she at length left the sick-chamber, her eyes were full of tears; and meeting Paulinus, she could not refrain from congratulating him on having such an angel for his mother. To Thamar she spoke enthusiastically of the charity and kindness that beamed out of Paulina's eyes. Then she betook herself to the kitchen, to help Rhode, and the two soon became firm friends.

When Eusebius came to see Thamar, she recognized

him of course at the first glance. "O Eusebius," she cried, "the God of our fathers has sent you to me. You who received my poor dear father, now no more, and nursed him so kindly, will not be less benevolent towards me and my little brother!"

"Why, here is Rabbi Sadoc's daughter! Who would have thought it!" said the grey-haired Priest, who was no less surprised at this unexpected meeting than Thamar herself. Many were the questions and answers exchanged between them, until Eusebius was acquainted with all Thamar's adventures since the night when she left Bethania in Lucius' company.

While they were talking Eusebius, was debating within himself whether he should leave Thamar under the impression that her father was dead. When Rabbi Sadoc left the Cenacle in wrath and excitement, Eusebius had sent Paulinus after him, to ascertain whither the unhappy man wended his way, and if he needed help, to afford it to him. Sadoc was seen to enter Ezechias' house; consequently Eusebius took for granted that he had fled with him and other leaders of the moderate party to Herod's palace, in order to escape the fury of the Zealots. After the conquest of that royal citadel on the previous day Ananias the High-Priest was discovered by the populace with Ezechias his brother and several other men of position, hiding in an aqueduct and were dragged out and put to death.<sup>1)</sup> It was only too probable that the unfortunate Rabbi had either fallen a victim to the raging mob, or had perished in the flames. Why then cause wounds, not yet healed, to bleed afresh? Eusebius deemed it wiser to allow Thamar to entertain the belief that her father had expired at Bethania, at any rate until he was able to give her some definite information as to the fate that had befallen him. So he contented himself with uttering a few words of sympathy, and proceeded, assisted by Sara, to make an examination of the injured limb.

The bone was broken just above the ankle, so it had to be set, and carefully bandaged. The operation was a painful one, but the difficulty of performing it was

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, loc. cit. II. 19, 9.

greatly diminished by Thamar's patient demeanor, and the care she took to keep perfectly still. When it was over, Eusebius praised his patient, saying if she had been a man she could not have borne it better. She would have to lie still, he told her, for a few weeks, then she would be able to run again like a doe over the mountains of Juda.

Eusebius then had a long conversation with Paulina as to the best means of securing the safety of the Rabbi's children and the Centurion. "The latter must be smuggled out of the city as soon as possible, he said. If Eleazar were at home, he would have found out his whereabouts by this time, and he would not have spared his life, nor indeed the life of any one of us. It is most fortunate that he should have gone on this reconnoitering expedition just now, and he will not have time to pay much heed to matters at home until there has been a decisive engagement between him and Cestius Gallus."

"The Romans are certain to conquer, and they will take this ill-fated city, as our Lord foretold." Paulina answered. "Could we not contrive to conceal the Centurion until his comrades enter the city? He would then protect us against the victorious troops."

"Who would have thought that the sister of the great Apostle Paul would have had any ulterior aim in performing a work of charity," Eusebius said with a smile. "Nay, you need not explain; I understand that you were not thinking of yourself, but of all of us, of those who are not in a position to migrate to Pella, and of the great treasure which Providence has confided to your care. But the Romans will not take the city at one blow, nor after one victory, but after a protracted siege. Remember our Lord predicted: Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round. We could not possibly conceal the Centurion for so long a time. And we must also find some place of hiding for the two children."

"Hitherto Mary has so graciously protected this lowly dwelling, that I do not see where a safer place for them could be met with in Jerusalem," Paulina replied. She inspired the Priest with her own confidence



at last, and succeeded in persuading him to leave the children with her at least until Eleazar returned. They then talked of the terrible days that were evidently very near, of the fiery sword that portended evil times, and other strange and ominous signs that were reported to have been seen from other parts of the country.

Eusebius confirmed this, saying that chariots and whole armies of warriors had been seen waging war among the clouds. "The last messenger from Pella informed me," he continued, "that our good bishop enjoined afresh most urgently by his mouth, upon all Christians whose duties did not oblige them to remain here, to quit the city without delay before the chastisement of its evil deeds fell upon it."

"Ought not Paulinus to obey that admonition? You know, I have released him from all his filial obligations, which would keep him at my side. Rhode will do all that is necessary for my poor body, and you will bring me the nourishment my soul needs."

"It is not only filial affection, but his duties as a server of the sanctuary that keeps him here," Eusebius answered. "However it is not improbable that this sacrifice you speak of will be required of you. I am told that the bishop thinks of sending a messenger to Rome to Cephas, for instructions as to several matters referring to the guidance of the communities in Palestine, and to ask for alms. From the outset the Christians in Jerusalem have been to a great extent supported by the charity of their brethren in Asia minor and in Greece. How often your saintly brother has sent us their loving contributions! Now there is some talk of sending Paulinus as our messenger to Peter, and to his uncle, the great Paul, who has returned to Rome from his journey to Spain. What do you say to this project?"

Paulina was taken a little aback at first. Then, raising her eyes to Heaven, she said: "Blessed be God, who has accepted the sacrifice which I more than once offered to Him in prayer. It is painful to nature, that I will not deny. But the heart of Jesus bled for us, and the heart of His dearest mother also. I thank the Lord that I can offer my poor boy for the welfare of his

brethren in Christ, as He gave His only-begotten Son for us, even while we were yet enemies. Let Paulinus leave Jerusalem this very day."

Eusebius looked with feelings of admiration at the frail invalid, whose holy courage was indeed worthy of a sister of the Apostle Paul; he gave thanks to God, who alone could inspire the hearts of mortal men, made out of dust, with such elevated sentiments. After a short pause he continued: "Paulinus need not go tonight, but he shall go soon. We must make some preparations and plans for his journey. Perhaps he and the Centurion can go together. I will talk to the Roman, and if he makes on me the impression of a man of honor, Paulinus can travel in his company. Now I have disturbed you long enough, Paulina. Hold converse with God in your heart; remember He is all around us, like the air we breathe. Now feed your pretty doves, which are fluttering about the window to remind you that they are hungry. Peace be with you!"

The doves were so tame that as soon as the window was opened, they flew into the room and walked about Paulina's bed, taking the crumbs of bread from her thin hands. Then they preened their feathers and spread their fan-like tails, looking at her with their clear, red eyes and gently cooing. The invalid could not help smiling at the funny ways of her pets, though two large tears were slowly rolling down her emaciated cheeks. Presently they all rose up like a cloud, and flew away to the valley of Hinnom, where many good grains might be gleaned.

Eusebius meanwhile betook himself to the outhouse where Lucius was in hiding, and soon convinced himself of the uprightness and good faith of the young Roman officer. The latter was anxious to attempt to escape from the city immediately, however hazardous his flight. He did not deem it advisable to wait for the entry of his victorious countrymen. "Of course there is no doubt," he said, "that Rome will ultimately conquer, and take a bloody vengeance on the seditious. But it is not improbable that the Jews will succeed in defeating Gallus in one or two battles, for he is by no means a clever

general. The war may be a protracted one. If so, I should be certain to be discovered, as my deadly enemy, Eleazar will move heaven and earth to get me into his hands. And if I were taken, it would be destruction to the kind people who have received me under their roof. I cannot think how I am to reach Caesarea or join the Roman army without my nationality being recognized and losing my life, but I must and will make the attempt. I do not want to involve others in my misfortunes. So please provide me with Jewish garments and advise me as to the best means of getting out of Jerusalem."

Benjamin had been listening attentively to the conversation. "I will go with you," he now said. "Eleazar would beat me within an inch of my life, if he were to catch me now. I can show you the way to Jericho and from there to Antioch; I am sure I could find it again, for I observed it carefully, when I journeyed hither with my father and sister. And once we are in Antioch, I will take you down to the harbor, where the large vessels bound for Rome lie at anchor. You can take me to Rome with you and show me the great amphitheatre with the lions and bears and elephants, about which you were telling me."

Eusebius questioned the boy about the time he had spent in Caiaphas' house, and was shocked to hear that the former High-Priest was kept confined by his son in the dungeon, which he knew from the description given of it to be the one wherein our Lord spent the night previous to His crucifixion. He perceived that it would be no easy task to keep this restless youngster concealed for any length of time in such close proximity to Caiaphas' house, and decided that he must be transferred elsewhere. So he told the boy that he would make arrangements to send him to Antioch to his father's agent as soon as Thamar was sufficiently recovered to bear riding on a camel. He also informed the Centurion that he had found a travelling-companion for him as far as Caesarea; but they must not venture upon flight till a day or two had passed. Lucius was profuse in his thanks; but Eusebius said with a smile that he did not render him this service entirely from unselfish motives,

he should expect him in return to protect his companion from the Romans and procure a passage for him on one of their ships to Italy. The Centurion willingly promised to do this.

For the next few days escape was not to be thought of. Messengers came from Eleazar announcing that Gallus was marching from Ptolemais with an army of thirty thousand strong, by way of Antipatris and Lydda, destroying and burning the cities. Simon Ben Gioras and the other generals were to repair with all the men capable of bearing arms, to Gibeon, where it would be easy to fall upon the enemy before they got clear of the mountain defiles. So the trumpets were blown on the hill of Sion, and heralds went through the streets summoning the inhabitants to battle. Some fifty thousand men went out against the Romans, and they succeeded in driving them back as far as Bethoron. In fact if the Roman cavalry had not come up to support the retreating cohorts, Gallus would have sustained a total defeat. To Eleazar's great annoyance Ben Gioras distinguished himself among the Jewish generals by his valor; he and his robber-band pressed closely on the Romans in the rear, and carried off a large number of beasts of burden laden with weapons, which he led to Jerusalem, thus snatching from his rival the laurels that the latter would fain have placed on his own brow.

This jealousy between the Jewish commanders prevented them from following up their victory. Instead of occupying the mountain passes they all hurried back to the city, fearful lest any party but their own should gain the ascendant. Gallus with his army followed close upon their steps. He pitched his camp on Mount Scopus, a few furlongs from the northern wall of the city. In a few days he penetrated into the new part of the city and set it on fire, probably with the connivance of some who were friendly disposed to the Romans. Within the city itself the strife of factions ran high, since the peace-party was not entirely suppressed. Some of the principal men were about to open the gates to Gallus, but Eleazar discerning the treachery they meditated, had them thrown down from the walls in sight of the

enemy. Gallus endeavored in vain to storm the second wall and the north side of the temple. His troops were so completely disheartened through the bad omens which some pagan priests announced to the superstitious Romans, that he suddenly raised the siege, intending to march back to Caesarea for reinforcements. But the Jews under the command of Eleazar and Ben Gioras cut off his retreat and gained another victory near Bethoron. Only by stratagem did he succeed in saving the main body of the army; he selected four hundred men and gave orders that they should remain in the camp and keep the fires alight, so as to lead the Jews to believe the army was still there, ready for a fresh engagement on the morrow, while he himself with the rest of his force stole away in the night, after sustaining a loss of five thousand killed and wounded. The Jews, furious at finding the troops had escaped, massacred the four hundred without mercy, and returned to Jerusalem laden with rich booty, besides having captured the machines for the siege and instruments of war belonging to the legions.<sup>1)</sup> Eleazar and the bandit-chief were received with acclamations; in fact the inhabitants could only not decide which of the two was to be greeted as the Messiah.

During this time Eusebius paid daily visits to Paulina and Thamar, bringing tidings of the course of events to the Centurion, and gifts of figs and grapes for Benjamin, solacing him with promises of a speedy release from confinement. In fact not only the child's spirits but his health as well began to suffer from his enforced imprisonment. On the evening of the day that witnessed the triumphal return of the Jewish commanders, as soon as it grew dark, Eusebius came hastily to the house, saying: "Now or never we must try our fortune. The whole town is keeping high festival. The Daughter of Sion, in her judicial blindness despised the true Messiah and preferred a robber before Him, now as a chastisement she has hailed a brigand-chief as her Messiah. The days of vengeance are come upon us!"

He conducted Lucius and Benjamin into the house where a farewell feast had been prepared. The Cen-

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus loc. cit. II. 19, 8-9.

turion dressed himself as a Jew, and in this disguise presented himself to Thamar. She smiled on seeing him for the first time in the garb of her countrymen, and held out her hand to him.

Every evening when night closed in, Lucius had, together with Benjamin, left his hiding-place and gone into the adjacent house. There seated beside Thamar's couch, he had listened to the instructions in the Christian faith which Paulinus gave under Eusebius' direction. His prejudices were wholly removed; he admired the Christian code of morality. Yet he could not make up his mind to take the step which Thamar had decided upon at once, by asking for admittance into the class of catechumens. His intellectual pride could not accept with humility the doctrines proposed to him, the mystery of the Holy Trinity was still an insuperable difficulty to him.

"Do you mean to depart without the cross of the catechumen being signed on your forehead? Thamar inquired.

"I will receive it as soon as I can comprehend better the Deity that is in Godhead one, in Persons three, in whose name the sign of the cross is made," he replied.

"Alas for your pride," she said in gentle rebuke. "How can a finite understanding ever comprehend the infinite? You should pray for faith, instead of reasoning."

"I will do so. And you must pray for me. I hope ere long to return with my victorious comrades. Meanwhile may good angels defend you and all in this house!"

"Can you doubt it, since the Queen of the Angels hallowed it by living here herself?"

Here Rhode entered, summoning Lucius to the farewell banquet, which was spread in Paulina's apartment, narrow though its limits were. Thamar too was present, for she managed to limp in, supported by Rhode's sturdy arm. This was the first time she had seen her hostess, and the reception she met with was of the most kind and motherly character. All present made an effort to be cheerful during supper, but with small success. The circumstances under which they were parting promised ill for the realization of their hopes.

Thus it was a relief to all when Eusebius rose and returned thanks after meat.

Paulinus went up to his mother's side and gave her a farewell embrace; then he knelt down to receive her blessing. "Serve Christ in His Church; fight the good fight and think of the crown laid up for the valiant. We shall meet again in Heaven," Paulina said.

All knelt for a few moments before Veronica's veil, which Bishop Simeon had left with Paulina for her consolation. Lucius and Thamar had not seen the miraculous imprint of the suffering Saviour before, and it made a deep and overwhelming impression on them. Paulinus had already related its history to them. Benjamin was shocked to behold the thorn-crowned countenance of the Man of Sorrows, and exclaimed: "Alas! how could that wicked Caiaphas let the Roman Governor torture him so!"

"It was for our sake," said Thamar. Her eyes were full of tears as turning to Lucius, she added: "Are you still an unbeliever?"

"I confess that it seems impossible for that to have been painted by the hand of man," the Centurion replied with emotion.

Eusebius would allow no further delay, and with heavy hearts the last farewells were spoken. "Tell me, Thamar, if you could walk, would you not rather go with us than remain behind in this city which will have the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrha? But keep up your courage; God will send His holy angel to preserve you and Sara and this sick lady and Eusebius from the fire, as He did Lot and his daughters. Only do not look back as Lot's wife, or you may fare as she did. Now goodbye, all. Rhode must take good care of the pretty white doves."

No one could help smiling amid their tears at Benjamin's parting speech, as the door closed behind the travellers. Eusebius showed them the way to a house not far from the Gate of the Essenes, which belonged to one of the Christians who had migrated to Pella. Eusebius had the key. Within he found awaiting his coming two servants, who had volunteered their services to the priest in case of need.

"The watchmen have left their beat," one of them said. "They are all down in the guard-room at the Essene Gate drinking the health of their new Messiah, the brigand-chief. I think it is quite safe to venture."

Passing through the house and across the back yard they reached the wall against which they had set a ladder. Paulinus went up first. Lucius wanted to carry Benjamin, but the little fellow would not hear of it, and insisted on mounting like the others. The two men went up last with ropes and a large basket.

"I thought it would be best for you to leave the city as your holy uncle left Damascus, when Aretas the king wanted to apprehend him,"<sup>1)</sup> Eusebius said to Paulinus. You will easily find the way to the Valley of the Terebinth, in spite of the darkness; there you will find one of our brethren with horses. May the angel who accompanied Tobias on his journey be your guide! But mercy on us, what is that?"

A red light suddenly shot up from Moria and spread over the city. "The temple is on fire!" they all exclaimed, raising their arms to Heaven in dismay.

"No, that is no natural fire," said one of the servants.

"It is one of the awful portents, the precursors of the divine judgments," the other observed. "At the time of the Feast of Tabernacles the Eastern Gate of the temple, whose doors are of brass, and so heavy that they can with difficulty be moved by twenty men, were seen to open of their own accord about the sixth hour of the night.<sup>2)</sup> And a voice louder and more sonorous than any voice of man was heard to cry: Let us remove hence, out of the sanctuary that is desecrated! Then came the sound of a multitude moving swiftly, the guardian spirits were departing.<sup>3)</sup> The priests tried to hush up the matter, but I know it for certain. Look too at that omen of ill over there, the terrible comet!"

The clouds had parted, and between the heavy masses, tinged with a red glare, which the surrounding

<sup>1)</sup> 2 Cor. 11, 32.

<sup>2)</sup> Josephus, loc. cit. VI. 5, 5.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. Tacitus, Hist. V. 13.



gloom rendered more striking, the fiery sword was seen hanging over Jerusalem, covering a great part of the sky. Meanwhile from the streets and lanes of the ill-fated city a confused sound arose of drunken mirth and rejoicing, with music and song; the populace were dancing and merry-making, and shouting: Long live our Messiah, Simon Ben Gioras, and Eleazar his brave general!

"Away, away, I am afraid some one is coming." Eusebius urged. "I congratulate you, whom our merciful God permits to escape from this unhappy city."

Paulinus was first let down over the high wall in the basket; the boy went next, and Lucius brought up the rear. The other men then returned, looking up now and again in terror at the temple and the heavens, whence these supernatural phenomena seemed to make a final, but alas! a vain appeal to the people of Jerusalem, inviting them to be converted and do penance.

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BOOK III.

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In Caesarea and in Rome.

## CHAPTER 28.

### With Cestius Gallus.

The three fugitives, whose flight from Jerusalem we lately witnessed, reached the gate of *Caesarea maritima* without meeting with any misadventure. That new and splendid sea-port town, with a population of more than 100,000, at that time the most important in Palestine, had been built some forty or fifty years before by the Herodian kings, on the site of an insignificant fortress. It could now boast all the luxury of a greco-roman town; Grecian and Roman temples, other edifices consecrated to Egyptian and ancient Phoenician rites, an amphitheatre, hippodrome, baths, gymnasium and palatial mansions were among its many attractions.

When Lucius, with Paulinus and Benjamin, entered the town, the commotion caused by the tidings of the insurrection in Jerusalem and the perfidious massacre of the Roman garrison had not yet subsided. The Romans, infuriated beyond measure at the shameful treachery of which their comrades had been the victims, and the defeat of their troops at Bethoron, had taken away their synagogue from the Jews residing in Caesarea, and put a great number of them to death. Josephus gives the number that were killed in an hour's time as more than twenty thousand.<sup>1)</sup> The appearance of Lucius and his two companions at the gate evoked a shout of rage, and they would have been cut down without further parley on account of their Jewish garments, had not Lucius addressed the sentries in Latin, crying: "Use your eyes before your swords, comrades; have you forgotten the Centurion Lucius Flavus?"

"By Hercules and all the gods!" exclaimed the decurion Martius, "can it be you! I shall have taken my oath that you were long since in the inferno! Praised

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<sup>1)</sup> Wars of the Jews, II, 18, 1.

be the gods who preserved your life! I will offer a black cock to the Fate — what was the old thing's name — for not having severed the thread of your destiny. You must tell us all your adventures this evening, in the tavern of Puteolus the Neapolitan, opposite the baths of Herod. By Hercules! your's must be wonderful a story!"

"I will, my good Martius, provided I have time. But first of all I must report myself to the Legate. Where is he to be found?"

"In Agrippa's palace, where you will see your charming patroness, Queen Berenice, as well. I will send one of my men to show you the way. You will not find the Legate in the best of tempers. He has had Gessius Florus arrested, and is going to send him to Rome to give an account of himself. And it just occurs to me, you might ask that he should be made, before his departure, to pay us the twenty thousand sesterii he owes us for apprehending Ben Gioras. The rascal got away, heaven knows how, and played the very deuce with us in those accursed defiles at Bethoron."

"I will see what can be done," the Centurion answered. "The Legate is not too fond of being reminded of that fellow, Ben Gioras. You look after my two companions while I am gone. They must be entertained at our expense, for they saved my life."

Martius got Roman armor and accoutrements for his Centurion, for even accompanied by a soldier it would not have been pleasant, scarcely safe, to walk through the streets in the attire of a Jew. When fully equipped, he repaired with a legionary for his guide to the palace where the first Agrippa died miserably, after he had desired his people to worship him as a god.<sup>1)</sup> Several officers who knew Lucius, standing in the vestibule, saluted him in almost a frightened manner, as they might one who came back from the dead. He was conducted into the interior of the palace. At the entrance of the *atrium* stood a marble statue of Jupiter Capitolinus, with a gold tripod for incense before it. A slave standing by offered to every one who passed a crystal vase full of incense, and each of the officers in turn threw a

<sup>1)</sup> Acts of the Apostles, 12, 23.

few grains on the glowing embers. By force of habit Lucius put out his hand and took the incense, but he let it fall again without offering this customary tribute to Jupiter; for although he was not a Christian as yet, he deemed it a mockery to offer sacrifice to one whom he could not acknowledge as a deity.

Pomponius Papilio remarked the omission, and said: "How now Lucius, have you been circumcised like Metilius, and is that the secret of your escape from slaughter?"

"No indeed, Papilio, I would have died with joy rather than purchase my life by such a dastardly act. I am not a Jew."

"Why then will you not scatter incense to Jupiter? I am no devotee, but I think at least one need not grudge a handful of incense to the greatest of the gods."

Before Lucius could reply Eupolemos the chamberlain came to meet him with a profound obeisance, saying that his royal mistress would be overjoyed to hear that her favorite was safe; she had wept over his fancied loss as over that of a friend. The Centurion answered that he would be happy to pay his respects to the Queen, as soon as he had, as he was in duty bound, reported himself to the Legate.

Outside the Legate's apartment a deputation of the principal and wealthiest Jewish refugees from Jerusalem were waiting for an audience. The face of one seemed familiar to Lucius. Surely that was Rabbi Sadoc, Thamar's father? He certainly looked more thin and bent, and the black beard which fell on his breast was freely mingled with grey. At that instant the old man raised his head and met Lucius' eye. He changed color, evidently recognizing him; but it was however not a smile of pleased greeting, but a scowl of bitter hatred that the Roman officer's glance encountered. Lucius asked himself what could possibly be the reason of this. He was on the point of going up to the Rabbi and telling him what he knew would be welcome news, that his little son was in Caesarea, when Cestius in person flung back the curtain, and coming hastily forward threw his arms round Lucius' neck, exclaiming: "Blest be the gods

who have brought you back to me! Come in, O son of my friend, and tell me what happy chance has delivered you from the jaws of death!"

Thereupon the Legate conducted the young officer into his room, and made him sit down on one of the couches. "Now, begin your story," he said, when the slave, who had placed a jar of the sweet wine of Cyprus and some goblets on an ivory table beside him, had retired. Lucius had however scarcely opened his lips, when Eupolemos announced the Queen, and Berenice, with her wonted defiance of the rules of good breeding, rustled into the apartment of her Roman guest.

"Pardon this intrusion, my dear Gallus," she cried. "I really cannot restrain my curiosity, no, not curiosity, my lively interest in the fortunes of this dear friend any longer. Let me stay here while the Centurion relates his adventures, then if you want to discuss secrets of state, I will absent myself at the first hint you give me."

The Legate drew a comfortable seat forward for the Queen, and Lucius commenced his narrative. His hearers listened with eager attention to the account of the siege, and were highly indignant at the execrable perfidy of the Jews.

"That Rascal Gessius Florus is responsible for all that, and indeed for all the misfortunes that have befallen us," the Legate said. "By Jupiter! I will send him to Rome to answer for this, if it should cost me my head!"

"He deserves to be banished to Gaul for the way in which he treated me, let alone anything else," interposed Berenice. "And to think of all the Roman knights whom he crucified! I should hardly think even the intercession of Poppea Sabina would avail to save such a monster from the fate he has merited a hundred times over."

"One never knows what Nero will do," Gallus answered. "That is why I did not send him with the Jewish envoys to Greece, where the Emperor goes starring it about in all the theatres in the character of a divine Orpheus and charioteer, but to the Praetor and Prefects of the town."

"And I shall send an indictment of no very mild description both to the Emperor and the Senate in my

brother's name and my own. Euphrasius the rhetorician is composing it in the style of Cicero's oration *contra Verrem*. Some passages he can transcribe verbatim, for of a truth this Florus throws the "Scourge of Sicily" into the shade! We ought to send a clever accuser with him to Rome, who would address the Court and depict all his infamous deeds in their true colors!"

"That is not a bad idea," Gallus replied. "How would it be if we were to send you to Rome, Lucius? You made your course of rhetoric at the same time as Titus Flavius, the son of Vespasian, and were among Quintilian's best scholars."

"Yes, and both Flavius and I, after a whole year spent in the Roman Forum, tired of the eternal legal disputes and battle of words, hung our togas on the wall, donned the soldier's cloak and took up the sword and shield. I knew that for me the path to glory and honor lay across the battlefield," said Lucius. "However, I am ready to act as prosecutor in this just accusation, and so bring upon Florus the vengeance that he deserves, if you choose to send me to Rome."

"Then we consider the question settled," the Legate replied. "I will provide you with the necessary documents, and give you letters of introduction to the most influential senators, to the Praetor and other officials. And in order that your title may sound more inspiring, I will nominate you tribune in place of poor Lysias who was so treacherously murdered."

"All hail to the brave tribune Lucius Flavius!" cried Berenice, clapping her hands. "May I be permitted to send to your quarters a suit of armor, one that belonged to my father, and which is worthy to be worn by the Captain of a Roman cohort? Now go on with your story which has been interrupted too long. I am longing to know how you escaped the general massacre."

Lucius then related at length how he had been treated by Eleazar, how he had been imprisoned with the lunatic Caiaphas, and released by Thamar and her brother. It may be imagined that Berenice listened most eagerly to this part of the narrative. When he spoke of the kind hospitality extended to him in Paulina's house, and the

manner in which his flight from Jerusalem was arranged for him, the Queen exclaimed: "I would lay a wager that those people who received and entertained you and your betrothed—for you have evidently lost your heart to the fair damsel—were Nazarites!"

"What makes you suppose that, my Queen?" Lucius asked.

"I conclude it from their unselfish charity. The sect of the Essenes are also philanthropic, but they make a boast of their philanthropy. But in this case no one was to know or hear of the kind deeds done, though they were attended by no slight degree of danger. I have not any doubt that Eusebius and Paulinus of whom you speak are adherents of the crucified Nazarite."

"Your perspicacity is no slight compliment to them. Those good people were in fact Christians," Lucius replied.

"In the name of all the gods, you surely have not become one of them!" the Queen cried in unfeigned alarm.

"No, not as yet," Lucius rejoined with some degree of hesitation.

"I should hope not indeed," the Legate interposed. "For if so, I could not send you to Rome. It is said of these Christians that in celebrating their mysteries they do all sorts of dreadful things."

"My good Gallus, what horrors are not mentioned in connection with the Eleusian and Egyptian ceremonies, yet the Romans do not cry out at them," Berenice said contemptuously.

"But this is in direct opposition to the will of the Emperor, who causes the Christians to be executed as dangerous to the State."

"Or rather for a very different reason, because they refuse to pay divine honors to himself and his statue," Berenice responded. Then addressing Lucius, she went on: "I am very glad that you have not joined those people. Your own good sense will deter you from a step which would ruin your whole career. I hope to see you climb high, very high. I too will give you epistles of introduction to several rich and powerful families in Rome, friends of our house in my father's lifetime.



Meanwhile let me invite you to take up your quarters in this house, if the Legate has no objection. My sister Drusilla, who has come here from Masada, will be delighted to have tidings of Tamar, she took a great fancy to the Rabbi's daughter. Only I must warn you not to let her or her slave Helena make a Nazarite of you, they both have a strong leaning to that sect."

Gallus declared that it would be most agreeable to him if the Queen had a room in her palace at her disposal for the tribune's accommodation, for this would make it easier for him to discuss with him the different points of the accusation to be brought against Florus. Thereupon the Queen rose up, and escorted to the door by both the officers, proceeded to the part of the palace occupied by her and her sister Drusilla.

The Legate then said he would at once admit the deputation of the Jewish refugees who had been waiting in the atrium for an audience all the morning, and he asked Lucius, if he was not tired, to be present, in order that he might briefly note down the charges they brought against Florus. The newly-created tribune willingly acceded to this request, and seated himself at the table, to jot down on a papyrus leaf the principal points of the accusation.

About a dozen men entered, almost all old and of a venerable appearance. They wore the lowly garb of petitioners, and walked barefoot, "in sackcloth and ashes," as they told Gallus. The expression of grief and care plainly visible on their emaciated countenances, harmonized with their outward aspect, and was not without its effect even on the stern Roman.

Rabbi Sadoc was the spokesman of the party. He accentuated the fact that those who accompanied him, formerly the most opulent and highly respected men in Jerusalem, were now reduced to beggary on account of the fidelity wherewith they had espoused the side of Rome. For that Florus was entirely to blame, since he had provoked the insurrection in spite of all their efforts to keep the peace. In proof of this statement each individual present poured out a number of grievances and declared himself ready to swear by the God of their

fathers that every word was true. Lucius noted down the several charges and the name of the accuser; he then informed the petitioners that they must have these accusations drawn up in Latin by the public notary and have them duly signed and sealed. The Legate would then add his seal and subscribe the document as an assurance that it was a deposition taken upon oath, and it would be put forward as evidence when Florus was tried at Rome. The delegates promised that this should be done.

Gallus then advised them to go by the next ship that sailed to Achaia, and lay their grievances in person before the Emperor. They could boldly assert that the blame of the insurrection and its consequences rested on Florus' shoulders, for the misfortune he himself had met with was entirely due to him, through his having released Ben Gioras in consideration of a large sum of money, instead of crucifying that formidable robber-chief as he ought to have done. In conclusion the Legate said:

"But as for your spokesman's assertion that you have all come to beggary for the cause of Rome, I wish such poverty as yours were the lot of every Roman in the empire. You may perhaps have suffered some losses but all of you together are I doubt not worth some five hundred talents, for all your poverty-stricken appearance. Do not make such an outcry and cut such grimaces, I set no value on your protestations. Know, all of you, that I require of you all a voluntary subsidy for the expenses of the war; amongst other things I must procure a fresh park of ordnance for the siege. We have lost more than a hundred ballistæ and catapults, chariots, battering-rams, and these must be replaced before the spring. I call it a *voluntary* tax, because I am sure you will pay it willingly, considering your enthusiasm for Rome, of which you cannot say enough. And lest your zeal should make you too generous, I will fix the amount of your contribution at the low figure of forty talents."

A cry of indignation rose from the Jews, all spoke at once, and each one tried to prove to the Legate how impossible it was to raise that sum. The Legate how-

ever showed no sign of relenting, on the contrary, as soon he could hear himself speak, he said: "That is too little? Well, you may lend me fifty talents. For as a matter of course you will be able to recoup yourselves from the funds of Ben Gioras and Eleazar and all the company of the seditious, as soon as we have conquered them."

Again there was a loud cry and confusion of protesting voices; when it had subsided, Gallus spoke again: "What, you actually want to make it sixty talents! Well, do so if you like. I leave you to fix the interest. But I can accept no more or you would make too large a profit."

At last the Rabbi Sadoc came forward and said that with the best of wills they could not raise as much as ten talents, and as for the security that was mentioned it was simply nil, as the leaders of the insurrection were already without funds, and after the siege they would be absolutely penniless.

"What, your future son-in-law is already a beggar? And you yourself are not in a position to advance sixty talents or even more out of your own resources? I happen to be acquainted with the state of your finances and your family connections, as you see, better perhaps than with the circumstances of your worthy friends here present."

During the whole of the little drama that was being enacted, the Rabbi had cast envenomed glances at Lucius, who could not help laughing at the amusing manner in which Gallus levied his "voluntary loan." At length the Rabbi could restrain himself no longer. "I know from whom you have obtained information respecting my family matters, from that fine fellow yonder! That wretch enticed my innocent, angelic daughter, my Tamar, the child of my affections and the image of my lost Anna, enticed her, I say, from her father's sick-bed, in order that he might gain possession of my hard-earned property! O God of my fathers! How canst Thou allow this kidnapper of innocent maidens to see the light of day! Why does not the earth open and swallow him up as it swallowed up Core and his com-

pany?" Then the unhappy father threw himself at the Legate's feet, and with uplifted hands besought him to see justice done. Such was his excitement and agitation that it was some time before he calmed down sufficiently to understand the answer which Lucius quietly gave to his passionate appeal.

"How am I to believe your statement," the Rabbi rejoined, since it is on your application that my property in Antioch has been sequestered by the very Legate in whose presence we stand?"

Cestius Gallus said he could not deny that Lucius' name appeared in the memorial handed to him by Queen Berenice's legal adviser. "That was done without my authorization," the tribune promptly replied. "Ask Queen Berenice herself, who gave the order for the purpose of preserving your property for your children, because both the Procurator Florus and Ben Caiaphas were scheming to deprive them of it. The lawyer probably inserted my name in the petition on his own authority, in the hope that it might influence you, most excellent Gallus, whom he knew to be my fatherly friend and patron, to lend a favorable ear to the request. I never so much as thought of your wealth, Rabbi, and your daughter has not as yet plighted her troth to me."

Rabbi Sadoc could hardly take this in at first, but it began to dawn upon him that he might have been mistaken. Trembling in every limb from suppressed agitation, he said: "If you are speaking the truth you are the noblest of your nation, and deserve to be a son of Abraham. But where is my daughter that I may inquire of her?"

"She is in Jerusalem, safely concealed, I hope, from Eleazar, who is stretching out a greedy hand to grasp her and her dowry. I will tell you where the man lives, through whom you can ask her what you like. In the meantime you can inquire all about her of your little son. Benjamin came to Caesarea this morning with me."

"What! my child, my boy, the son of my right hand, whom the robbers carried off, is here, and you brought him to me! You, on whom in my heart I unjustly called down curses!" exclaimed the Rabbi, falling on his

knees before Lucius, and touching the ground with his forehead. "What can I do to obtain your forgiveness? May the Most High turn my curses into a thousand blessings and make you a partaker of the salvation that He promised to Abraham and his seed for ever!"

The Legate and the tribune found it difficult to put a stop to the petitions and blessings which the Rabbi poured fourth with passionate emphasis, in the flowery language of the Oriental, and to return, after this episode, to the matter in hand. Sadoc was too agitated to continue to act as spokesman, therefore an old man, Baruch Ben Jonas by name, took his place; he finally succeeded in persuading the Legate to content himself with the sum of twenty-five talents, and the deputation withdrew from the palace.

Lucius also retired, but not before he had made the Legate, who was in the best of humors, promise to compel Florus to pay the Decurion Martius and his comrades the twenty thousand sesterii due to them.

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## CHAPTER 29.

### A Reunion.

Enpolemos the chamberlain overwhelmed Lucius with congratulations upon his promotion as he conducted him to the apartment allotted him. It consisted of a suite of three rooms, all elegantly furnished, the windows commanding a fine view of the sea. The promised suit of armor was already there; a splendid cuirass, the breast-plate of which represented the conflict of Pelides and Hector in embossed work, and a magnificent helmet, ornamented with the figure of the Roman wolf. Lucius was most delighted with the sword, whose glittering blade bore the name of Hephaistos, the famous armorer of Alexandria; the hilt was of ivory, inlaid with gold.

"I shall hardly dare to exhibit myself to my comrades in this equipment, they will be so envious of me. It is really worthy of an emperor!" Lucius said, pleased and proud of his new acquisition. "May it prove a good augury," the smooth-tongued Asiatic rejoined. "My royal mistress thinks the most handsome armor befits the most handsome warrior."

The chamberlain then placed the services of a slave at Lucius' disposal, and bowed himself out, after informing the tribune that the Queen wished to see the boy of whom he had given so interesting an account. So Lucius despatched a messenger to Martius bidding him bring his two fellow-travellers to him without delay.

Glad to have a few moments to himself, he seated himself at the open window and looked out over the busy harbor below, and the calm sea beyond. He descried a white sail gliding over the waves in a westerly direction, towards Greece or Italy. With it his thoughts travelled to the city of the seven hills on the banks of the yellow Tiber, to the unassuming but snug little house in the garden on the Appian Way where were his dear mother and sister. How delighted he would be to

see them again, to present himself in his new dignity of tribune, charged with an important commission which might easily lead to higher honors. In the vivid colors of affection he depicted to himself the joy of meeting again, and thanked the fates that had cast his lines in such pleasant places. Lying at anchor in the harbor he saw the stately trireme with the figurehead of Castor and Pollux, which was shortly to bear him to the coasts of his native land. Almost unconsciously he murmured the lines of Horace:

Sic te diva potens Cypri,  
Sic fratres Helenae, lucida sidera.<sup>1)</sup>

Then suddenly, while the divinities of the heathen Olympus took their accustomed form to his mind's eye, the image of the thorn-crowned countenance on which he had, standing by Thamar's side, gazed with such deep emotion only a day or two previously, presented itself before the mental vision of this man, whose heart was filled with thoughts of ambition. Were all the deities whom he had from his childhood been taught to adore, of whom the poets had sung, to vanish like phantoms of hell before the face of this sorrowful, this crucified God? He felt that, in fact, they could have no place beside One who proposed suffering and self-denial to His followers in the place of sensual gratifications. But this idea was repellent to his proud nature.

What should prevent him from revering them as symbols of beauty, of nature, of civil power, and paying them as such the customary homage, while the true worship of his innermost soul was given to the sublime and supreme Being, the one true and living God, whom Eusebius had made known to him? The voice of conscience did indeed whisper to him the first and great commandment: I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no strange gods beside me. But he sought to stifle this voice and to effect a compromise. The satirical remark of Pomponius Papilio when he abstained from casting incense as was usual, on the altar of Jupiter Capitolinus,

<sup>1)</sup> Horat. Carm. 1, 4.

May Cyprus' mighty goddess o'er thy course preside  
And Helen's brethren twain, bright orbs, thy footsteps guide.

and still more the Legate's assertion that he would not send a Christian to Rome, rang in his ears. He said to himself that he was not a Christian as yet, that the code of Christianity was not binding upon him. For the matter of that, he determined to avoid sacrificing to the gods as far as he could, or to do so as a mere empty form, not as an act of worship. At all events, he said to himself, I will not let a thing of such slight importance mar the happiness of a joyous reunion with those I love, much less shall I allow it to stand in my way, and prevent me from attaining the high military rank to which I aspire. I should be a fool if I did that. Besides, a man's first duty is to obey the dictates of reason."

Such were the sophisms wherewith ambition sought to stifle the voice of conscience in Lucius' heart. His mind was not however set at rest, and consequently he was not at all sorry when Paulinus entered with Benjamin, and the merry little boy began to tell him about all he had already seen in the town. The decurion Martius, with whom he had struck up a friendship, had even taken him down to the harbor, and he had seen the sea for the first time. It was just what he had fancied it to be, he said, only he had not seen any large waves or great fishes. He would like to have seen the whale that swallowed Jonas. But Martius who had never heard the story, told him that such monsters of the deep were far out at sea, and did not come near the land. That could not however be true or how could the great fish have vomited Jonas on the dry land? A sailor with whom he had made friends, promised to take him out to sea, but Paulinus would not hear of that, nor would he give him permission to go to the amphitheatre with Martius on the morrow, when there was to be a fight of gladiators. Paulinus had said those combats were sinful, and no fit sight for him. Was that true? the boy asked in conclusion.

"Yes, quite true, my little friend," Lucius answered, "Eusebius would tell you the same. Besides, you must not go about with people of whom you know nothing. The sailor might have taken you over the sea to Egypt, and sold you for a slave."



"That would not have been such a bad thing. It is what happened to Joseph, and afterwards he became the chief man in Egypt after the king. I might have done the same. Then I should have sent for you, and Thamar, and Paulinus and Martius. Thamar should have been Queen, you the General, and Paulinus High-Priest. What do you say to that?"

"And your father, would you not have sent for him?"

"Poor Father! Why, you know he has been dead a long time. He is now in Abraham's bosom."

"Sometimes one who was thought to be dead has proved to be still alive. Today I met a man very like your father—"

"Do you think it was really my father? Oh, if Thamar knew that! Yes, yes, it was Father. I see it in your face. Tell me, where is he now?"

"You must have patience. He will come here after sunset, and look, already the sun nearly touches the water. Go into the next room and watch the people who come in at the palace gate. Perhaps you will see him coming and then you can tell us."

The boy was delighted; he ran to the window that looked on to the street, and eagerly scanned every figure that passed.

Meanwhile Paulinus told Lucius that Eusebius had half-expected that the child would meet with his father in Caesarea, if the latter had been able to effect his escape out of Jerusalem. "I only hope his soul may not suffer by it," the young man said with somewhat sad accents. "But," he added, "it was impossible to keep him concealed in the city. Besides Eusebius thinks that perhaps the seed sown in Rabbi Sadoc's soul may yet spring up. That may be the case, now that the cloud of suspicion and mistrust which made him leave the Deacon's house so hastily is dispelled. And all at home will pray for the boy."

At that moment Benjamin burst into the room, crying out: "Do come and look! I think it must be Father, only he has a long grey beard, and is thinner than Father ever was."

"I do not doubt it is he," the tribune replied. "Sick-

ness and anxiety about you and your sister have prematurely aged him. Wait here till he comes. Paulinus and I will go into the other room, so that you may have him all to yourself, and tell him everything."

But the child could not wait till his father came in, he dashed down the stairs into the atrium and threw himself into his arms. Drusilla, who happened to be passing, was a witness of the joyful meeting, and subsequently told her sister that the Rabbi was so overcome that he had to lean against one of the marble pillars for support, and the tears ran down his cheeks as he kept repeating: "My child, my son, my Benjamin."

Presently both father and son were seated in the tribune's chamber, and when the first outburst of delight was over, Benjamin poured out all the tale of his adventures, interrupted from time to time by questions from the Rabbi. Sadoc learnt from his lips the confirmation of the contract between Ben Caiaphas and the brigand Ben Gioras. "The rascals wanted to take my life and my property, and I owe the preservation of both in a great measure to that generous young Roman," he said to himself. When Benjamin told him about Caiaphas being mad, and how in his ravings he attested the innocence of Christ and bore witness to His resurrection, he questioned the child closely, and could not help reluctantly acknowledging that the Nazarite was a great prophet, and perhaps the precursor of the Messiah.

"He must have been a just man, and we will not revile him any more," the Rabbi said. "But he cannot have been the Messiah, because our nation to this day, thirty years after his death, still groans beneath the yoke of Rome, whereas the Daughter of Sion ought to be the Queen of all nations."

"He must have been the Messiah, father, because He said so Himself, and a just man does not lie," the boy rejoined.

The Rabbi did not know how to answer this simple remark. But his natural obstinacy came to his aid. "You understand nothing about such matters—go on with your story, child," he said.

Benjamin next told all about the arrest of the Cen-

turion and how he and Thamar released him from captivity. "She is in love with that man, there is no doubt of that," the Rabbi muttered under his breath, "and she shall marry him if he will consent to embrace the Jewish faith. What should hinder him? Thousands of well-born Romans have become proselytes to our creed." And on hearing of Thamar's accident and the great kindness she had met with in Paulina's house, he added: "Yes, I must ask pardon of Nicanor and Eusebius, they acted nobly. If only they did not worship idols! But tell me, my boy, the end of it will be that they have made Nazarites of Thamar and you?"

"Thamar believes that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, the Messiah, and so do I," Benjamin replied.

"How unfortunate! But I really cannot be angry with you, I very nearly fell into the snare myself. But now that you are in my hands, I shall soon drive these foolish ideas out of your little head. And my sensible Thamar! Would that she were here with me! We must get her out of Jerusalem, even though it should cost me the half of my goods. Now where is the noble Roman, to whom I am deeply indebted?"

"In there, with Paulinus," Benjamin answered, leading the way into the adjoining chamber. Then the Rabbi again prostrated himself before the tribune, and kissed the hem of his garment, expressing his gratitude in the elegant, poetic language which flows so readily, so copiously from the lips of an Oriental, and which in the Rabbi's case, undoubtedly came from the heart. After thanking Paulinus also, Sadoc drew Lucius aside, and said:

"I owe to you my life, my property, the honor of my daughter and the freedom of my son. What can I offer you in return for such benefits? I know but one thing, one jewel with the possession of which you may think yourself repaid. The Wise Man says that fine gold and precious stones, nay all that he hath, are as nothing to a man in comparison with his love. Well, I am willing to take you as my son, and give my daughter to you, together with a princely dowry, on one condition, that you conform to our religion, as so many heathen have done."

"You offer me what is most dear and precious to you, and according to your views, the stipulation you make is one which would be a blessing to me," Lucius replied. "I cannot however accept your offer, deeply as I admire and esteem your daughter."

"Very probably you are prejudiced against the rite of circumcision, and shrink from the obligation of observing the whole law of Moses. But only "proselytes of justice" are pledged to that. I should be quite satisfied if you became what is called a "proselyte of the gate" one that is, who has abjured every kind of idolatrous worship and adores the one true God."

"If I altered my creed at all, I should become a Christian. Your daughter too, intends changing her religion for that of the Christians, which, as far as I understand it, appears to be a completion of the Jewish. Some time hence I may perhaps ask for your daughter's hand, but this is not a time for the exchange of lover's vows. My duty calls me to Rome, and I know not whether I shall ever return to Palestine. But your daughter is in great peril so long as she remains in Jerusalem. What will become of her when the city is given over to the devouring flames, as there is little doubt it will be, not only because of the exasperation felt by the Romans, but because of the terrible portents that are seen in the heavens."

"You are right, my first duty is to secure the safety of my poor Thamar," the Rabbi rejoined. "But how am I to do this? In Jerusalem a reign of terror prevails. They have elected a Council of war, of which the most desperate and bloody-minded men are members, they have overthrown the authority of the old aristocratic families out of whom the priests used to be chosen, and lots are cast to decide who among the sons of Levi shall be raised to the priesthood. The lot fell upon Phannias, a most ignoble and unworthy person, utterly ignorant and unlettered. They forced the office upon him, and he now sits on the seat of Moses, as the successor of the high-priest Aaron.<sup>1)</sup> Whoever is suspected of disapproving these ungodly proceedings is ruthlessly behead-

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, loc. cit. IV. 3. 8.

ed. Joseph Ben Mathias, who you know was spokesman when the charges were brought against the Procurator, and who on that account is very popular, was made Governor of both the Galilees, to remove him out of the reach of the new Sanhedrim. He wrote all this to us, for he is a man who always blew hot and cold, and he hopes under favorable circumstances to make his peace with the Romans. I am known in Jerusalem as being friendly to the Romans, and for that reason should be arrested at the gates of the city, and condemned to death by Eleazar. If you could induce your young friend there to venture back to the city and bring my daughter to me, as soon as she is able to undertake the journey, I swear by the God of my fathers, he should be royally rewarded!"

Paulinus was called in to hear the Rabbi's proposal. But he explained that obedience required him to set sail for Rome by the next vessel, and no offer of money could induce him to neglect his bounden duty. He would however put the Rabbi in communication with Eusebius, and he would doubtless contrive some means of getting Thamar out of the city, when he heard that her father was found, and her injured foot again allowed her to travel.

Rabbi Sadoc was obliged to content himself with this prospect. Benjamin gallantly offered to go back alone to Jerusalem, and fetch his sister. "I should slip in through the gate when some caravan was passing in, and never fear but that I would take good care Eleazar did not catch me. And once there, Eusebius would be so kind as to let me and Thamar down in a basket over the wall. Nothing would be easier." So the boy said, but the Rabbi thought otherwise, and determined to look elsewhere for the assistance he needed.

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## CHAPTER 30.

### In the Sybil's Cave.

One evening, shortly after the incidents related above, Berenice invited the Legate and the principal officers to a banquet, given in honor of Lucius' rescue and his promotion to the rank of tribune.

The *triclinium*, or banqueting-hall, was gorgeously decorated. Bronze statues supported gilt candelabra, which, filled with fragrant oil, diffused a soft, mellow light throughout the spacious apartment. Garlands of flowers and fruit hung in festoons from pillar to pillar; costly tapestries and curtains, in artistically arranged folds hung from window to floor; but the chief ornament of the hall was a wall-painting in mosaic, representing a banquet of the Olympian gods, to whom Ganymede and the Graces offered nectar and ambrosia.

"Unfortunately I am only able to provide terrestrial aliments for my guests," said Berenice, as she entered the hall with Drusilla, and approached the group gathered in front of the masterpiece of Italian mosaic-work.

"From your hand they will taste more delicious than the nectar of the gods," Papilio remarked with somewhat fulsome flattery. Berenice answered with a scornful glance, and turned to Lucius Flavius, presenting the newly-created tribune to the assembled company as her especial favorite.

Eupolemos showed the guests to their places at each of the three tables. The men reclined on cushions supporting themselves on their left elbow, while the ladies sat upright. At the centre table the Legate filled the place of honor; next to him Lucius was seated, in close proximity to Berenice, who was on the other side of the horseshoe shaped table. The place assigned to the Tribune was one generally given to Papilio, who from

his seat at one of the side tables cast many a jealous look at his more favored rival.

Slaves elegantly attired now entered, distributing wreaths of freshly-gathered roses to the guests. Berenice selected one of special beauty which she placed with her own hand on Lucius' blond locks. Servants then filled the golden goblets with the wine they carried in large pitchers, and Gallus rose to make a libation to Bacchus. Papilio watched to see whether Lucius would observe this heathen custom; he did so, but in a very ungracious manner.

The conversation naturally turned upon Jerusalem. Lucius was called upon to relate his adventures, and Berenice contrived, by the questions she put to him, to show all his actions in the most favorable light. He could not help wondering why the royal lady singled him out for such marked attentions. But he would have been more than human if, devoid as he was of supernatural grace, he had not felt flattered by the notice of a beautiful and ambitious woman. He gazed with ever increasing admiration on her regal charms, and the image of the pure and pious Thamar faded rapidly out of his mind, as if obliterated by some malign spell.

"You wonder perhaps why I am so friendly towards you," Berenice whispered to him when the attention of the company was turned for a few moments in another direction. "It is because fate, as I will prove to you, has in store a high destiny for both of us, one too which will bring us into close proximity. Shortly before I made your acquaintance, I consulted an Egyptian Sybil, who is deeply initiated in the magic arts, concerning my future; she showed me a figure which I will make her show to you also, this very day. She lives in Caesarea, I have told her that I would come to her at midnight; you must accompany me."

Singers and musicians now entered, and sang hymns in praise of wine and mirth and the free enjoyment of all that this brief life offers. Several of the guests who had drunk deeply, joined in the well-known choruses of the Greek songs, not always with a very steady voice, and finally shouted lustily the lines of Horace:

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero  
Pulsanda tellus.<sup>1)</sup>

Now fill the cups, and lightly tread  
The graceful mazes of the dance.

Lesbian dancing girls next made their appearance, and performed a round dance, during which they tendered fresh wreaths to the drinkers. One more *compositio*, or toast, was to crown and conclude the festive meal. Lucius was to be proclaimed king of the evening, but he excused himself from accepting this honor on the plea of extreme fatigue, as he had had no sleep for several nights. He therefore rose and followed the Princess out of the hall.

"Apparently he prefers Cytherea to Bacchus," Pomponius Papilio called after him, and the witticism, poor as it was, was greeted with a burst of laughter.

Two litters stood ready in the atrium; these Berenice and Lucius entered after they had wrapped a dark mantle over their festal garments.

Berenice asked Drusilla if she would not go with them; on her declining to do so, the Queen made a sign to the slaves, and off they went at a quick pace through a labyrinth of narrow streets. In a remote quarter of the town they stopped before a house which stood alone, surrounded by a wall. The gates mysteriously opened of their own accord apparently, as soon as Eupolemos clapped his hands and mentioned his mistress' name. The chamberlain together with Elpis the maid remained in the garden; the latter trembled in every limb and assured her companion that she should die of fear if she were forced to enter the dwelling where intercourse with evil spirits went on.

In fact Circe the enchantress had surrounded herself with sufficient horrors to inspire the most valorous of her nocturnal visitants with alarm. Scarcely had Lucius and Berenice crossed the gloomy threshold, when two Nubians of gigantic stature, and black as night, started up as if out of the ground. They carried torches which flickered strangely, and cast a weird, bluish light on the

<sup>1)</sup> Horat. Carm. I, 37.



singular figures in the hall, giving them almost a life-like appearance. The heads of the figures which were those of birds or animals seemed to turn towards the newcomers, and their eyes sparkled with a red or green light. *Avertant dii!* Lucius muttered, while Berenice involuntarily put her hand through his arm and pressed closer to him.

Preceded by their swarthy guides, they passed beneath a curtain uplifted to allow of their ingress, and descended a flight of steps. On either side stood tripods on which burnt brimstone-colored flames the asphyxiating fumes seeming to sink rather than rise on the heavy air. "They burn for the gods of the inferno, not for the Olympiads," Berenice whispered.

Presently a low door was reached, before which two snakes, hissing ominously, darted their forked tongues at them. Lucius hesitated to proceed, but the Nubians held their torches up to the venomous creatures and they retreated into a hole in the wall, and stooping low, the visitors passed under the archway. At a blow from the ibis-headed staff one of the Nubians carried, the door, groaning on its hinges, slowly opened, revealing a dimly-lighted hall, in which pale flames seemed to dart about like will 'o the wisps.

From the far end, out of the darkness a voice cried: "Enter, Daughter of the great Herod, of him who now sits at the table of the gods." But as Berenice, grasping the tribune's hand, was in the act of obeying this invitation, two black dogs flew forward, barking hoarsely. Berenice screamed with terror, and Lucius drew his sword to protect her. However the same voice that had spoken before bade the fierce animals be quiet, and they fell back growling angrily, while Berenice and her companion entered the hall, the door of which closed behind them.

A strange, wild music rose and fell on the air in mournful cadences as the Nubians conducted the visitors to seats, supported by three feet, the bones of some gigantic animal. The servants then disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared.

"Are you prepared to be initiated into the great

mysteries which the powers of the infernal regions, reluctantly it is true, and only in obedience to one mightier than themselves, reveal to mortals? The hour is well chosen, the moon and the earth are in conjunction and the heavens are favorable. Do not stir from your seats, whatever happens!"

A blue flame started up, disclosing a woman, seated on a crocodile, which appeared to move lazily in a basin shut in by blocks of lava. The woman extended her thin arms, and shook her heavy locks, confined by a serpent that was entwined round her head, on to her bony shoulders. Then rising, she gathered round her her black robe, held in at the waist by a broad girdle adorned with cabalistic signs, and setting her bare foot on the crocodile's head, leaped to the ground. After tracing a circle with her sceptre round her visitors which sparkled with phosphorescent light, she returned to her former seat.

The incantation now began. Singing softly, and describing all manner of curves and figures in the air with her magic wand, she called on all the gods of Egypt by name. The mysterious music was again heard, it seemed to come from the bowels of the earth, gradually coming nearer. "They are approaching," the witch exclaimed. "Come hither, thou who readest the future; come hither, thou who dost weigh the fate of mortals in thy balance; come hither, O terrible one, whose name I dare not utter! Tell the daughter of the great Herod what you have in store for her, the fate you have measured out for her, apportioned to her."

Then a red light blazed up, a curtain was drawn, disclosing seven cauldrons, whence arose a dense vapor, a sweet, intoxicating perfume. As the fumes dispersed, a form was visible bearing a striking resemblance to Berenice, in regal garments but without a crown. Berenice uttered a low cry, and gazing eagerly at the phantom figure, grasped the tribune's arm, inquiring: "Who is that?"

"It is you, my Queen, as sure as I sit here," Lucius answered.

"Silence! You will scare away the nameless ones! See, already jealous clouds shroud the view of the

future!" cried Circe; and in fact the smoke rose up again like a veil around the queenly figure.

"Produce it again! You shall be paid twice, thrice your fee!" Berenice said in accents of entreaty.

"It shall be as you wish, but beware how you again disturb the spirits!" The witch began her incantations anew, the smoke-like veil divided and Berenice's image was again discernible. But this time she was not alone. A man, a soldier wearing Roman armor stood opposite her. A thrill of horror ran through Lucius, as he recognized himself. It was his figure, his bearing, and even the embossed work on the breastplate was the same as that of the one which Berenice had given him. But the laurel wreath of the conquerors decked the glittering helmet, and from the shoulders of the phantom form hung a mantle of imperial purple. And the wraith—for by what other name could the apparition be called—held out to Berenice a gleaming coronet. The features of the apparition Lucius could not however clearly discern, as the countenance was turned away, looking towards the background, where the city of Jerusalem might be seen, enveloped in flames.

Again the queen laid her hand on Lucius' arm and pointed triumphantly to the phantom figures, as if to say: Who are those but you and I? But the tribune, no longer master of himself, called to the witch: "But now show me his face!" A lightning flash, a clap of thunder followed; the flames were extinguished and a peal of satanic laughter was heard.

"Again the spell is broken," Circe cried. "All is at an end now; I cannot venture again to conjure up the spirits. We should be made to feel their vengeance."

"At least call up my ancestor, Herod the Great!" Berenice entreated. "I have not yet received the diadem that the noble Roman held out to me. He must tell me whether it will ever be mine."

"The immortals do not always know the future, nor are they always inclined to reveal what they know to mortals. Moreover I warn you that your grandfather may appear under a different form to what you expect."

Berenice repeated her entreaty, and the magician

continued: "It shall be as you wish. The time is not yet past, I will make the attempt. But do not blame me if the ghost of your grandfather alarms you."

Once more the mysterious music recommenced, and the dancing flames reappeared. A huge horned owl screeched, and slowly flying over the heads of the two visitors, who sat in strained expectancy, alighted on the shoulders of the witch. In the place of the cauldrons a black vessel on a tripod, surrounded by sulphurous flames occupied the centre of the stage; from it rose aerid stupefying fumes with occasional puffs of white smoke. The enchantress recommenced her incantations, a formula of strange Egyptian words, uttered in loud, shrill accents, as the music grew louder and more rapid in tact. Suddenly a cry was heard, the music ceased, and a figure appeared, encircled by flames and smoke, broad-shouldered but bent, wearing a mantle of fire and a crown glowing like the white heat of a furnace.

Berenice stifled a cry of terror, and the apparition spoke as follows: "Who calls me from my throne, from the realms where I shall reign eternally?"

The witch replied: "The daughter of thy great grandson, the illustrious Queen Berenice,"

"Then to her, and not to thee will I speak," the phantom went on. "Berenice, thou art the last scion of my race, to thee I look with hope to sustain the honor of our house. Hope, do I say! That word has no longer a place in our vocabulary. Thy father deserved the name of a prince, but thy brother is a fool, a truckler to the Romans. And thy sister—neither one thing nor the other! But thou hast thy ancestor's blood in thy veins. What wouldst thou know?"

"Whether fate destines the imperial crown for my brow," Berenice answered.

"Seize it, hold it fast! Courage and craft rule the world. There was one who came and wanted to dispossess me of my crown. He was born in Bethlehem. But I held it fast, and now I shall wear the diadem to all eternity. Dost thou see how it glows and glistens? Hast thou ever seen an earthly crown emit so intense a light? It will deck this brow for ever and ever. And if thou

wert to see my throne! The brilliance of earthly fire is a feeble glimmer in comparison with it. Seize what thou canst, hold it fast. Be a worthy descendant of thy royal race, and before long thou wilt experience the sort of happiness it brings to have ruled on earth for a few miserable years. Now fare thee well, my time is up; I must return to my throne of fire, and join the assembly of the rulers of the world."

The apparition began to fade away, the incandescent crown being the last to vanish from sight. Berenice cried aloud: "Grandfather, I will follow thee!"

But the phantom disappeared with a bitter laugh. The music ceased; the owl flew away with a mocking scream. The two Nubians started up from the ground, and conducted the visitors by the way they had come to the hall where stood the statues of the Ibis-headed Egyptian deities with gleaming eyes.

Then the enchantress came forward out of an adjoining apartment, and invited them to enter and rest awhile after the excitement and agitation of the past hour. She offered them grapes, wine and other dainties, but nothing would have induced either Lucius or Berenice to partake of them. The latter however expressed her wish to know what the apparitions predicted.

"How strange mortals are," said Circe sorrowfully, "they believe what I say, but mistrust my hospitality! —Well, daughter of the illustrious Herod, what more would you have? The crown of the Roman empire is offered to you, and if I am not deceived, by the hero at your side; your ancestor bids you seize it and hold it fast! What more can you desire? I also bid you grasp and hold it. All hail to the future Ruler of the great Roman empire and his beauteous consort!"

It was near daybreak when the litters were set down within the palace gates. Sounds of revelry still issued from the triclinium, and some slaves were seen carrying Pomponius Papilio to his own house dead drunk.

"*Epicuri de grege porcus,*" muttered Berenice turning away with a look of disgust. She beckoned to Lucius to follow her into a brilliantly lighted room, and said to him: "What do you say now, Lucius Flavus? Now you

will understand why I have shown so marked preference for you above all others of your nation. Before I ever saw you, before we met for the first time here in Caesarea, Circe had already shown me your image. It was yours beyond a doubt, although then, as tonight, I could not see the countenance of the apparition quite clearly. But your fair locks, which I never yet saw on any other Roman, were discernible below the helmet; besides your name was shown to me in Greek characters. We two are destined by fate to wear the imperial crown of Rome."

"I cannot take in the idea! How is it possible that I should ever stretch out my hand to take the sceptre of the Caesars?" the tribune answered.

"With courage and craft anything, everything can be done, as my ancestor's ghost told us. Nero will not live long; he goes too far and is so frightfully cruel as a ruler. The last of Julius' race dies with him. Some military emperor will be chosen out of the army, you will not be the next occupant of the imperial throne. But those military rulers fall as quickly as they rise. In the course of two or three years there will have been as many wearers of the purple. Meanwhile see that you choose your friends wisely in Rome, and get yourself promoted from the rank of tribune, which you are very young to have reached, to that of legate. You will have no difficulty in making yourself a favorite with two or three legions. Perchance before long you may win the wreath of the successful general, which you saw resting on your brow. Then seize whatever comes within your reach, and hold it fast! And in the flush of triumph do not forget Berenice, who pointed out to you the path to glory and dominion!"

The phantoms he had seen, and the words he now heard, which seemed to demonstrate the possibility of realizing what those phantoms foreshadowed, had on Lucius almost the effect of intoxication. Pride and ambition swelled his heart. Hitherto military renown and the rank of legate had been the limit of his aspirations; now the highest goal, the conqueror's triumph, and after that the crown of the world-wide empire, suddenly appeared to be within his reach. Nay more, he

felt almost certain of attaining them. For Lucius was the child of a superstitious age, and believed implicitly in the phantoms that had been conjured up before his vision. The only thing that shook his faith, was the doubt whether the apparition that took his form, also wore his features. And this shadow was dispelled when Berenice assured him that it was he, that she had besides read his name. It was a certainty then; the wreath of the conqueror, the crown of the Caesars was ultimately destined for him.

His heart beat high as he made answer to the Queen: "If ever I hold the imperial crown in my hand, as we have just seen, it shall deck no other brow than yours, Princess, for it is you who have pointed out to me the way to this lofty goal. And, by Jupiter, my feet shall walk in that way."

"Here is my hand to our covenant!" Berenice exclaimed. "You shall not want means. Our house is still wealthy; and we have friends among the Roman senators. I will give you notes of exchange and letters of introduction. Now let our destiny be accomplished, the destiny measured and weighed out for us two by the fates. Swear by the deities of the inferno that you will be faithful to me!"

The tribune took the solemn oath that he would share the throne with none other than with her.

As if in a dream Lucius allowed Eupolemos, who had apparently been eavesdropping, to accompany him to his chamber. Gladly would the good man have heard what passed during the visit to the enchantress' cave, but Lucius dismissed him, saying he was tired and desirous to rest. For a long time he stood gazing out at the grey waters of the sea, over which the first faint light of dawn was breaking. At last he drew the heavy curtains and flung himself on the soft cushions of his bed. But he was too heated, too excited to sleep. The phantom forms he had seen came and went before his eyes, and the remembrance of Herod's ghost terrified him. "He did not seem very happy in the purple, which seemed to burn like fire, nor to wear his lustrous crown with much pleasure," he murmured to himself.

And then all of a sudden the thorn-crowned head of the Saviour, depicted on Veronica's veil rose before him. And beside the proud Berenice he fancied he saw Thamar's form, pure and gentle, fixing on him her large, lustrous eyes with an expression trustful as that of a child. A pang shot through his heart. But he turned impatiently away, saying: "Begone! No crown of thorns for me! And the Rabbi's daughter, much as I love the dear child, is certainly ill-fitted to grace an imperial throne."

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## CHAPTER 31.

### The Voyage.

Rabbi Sadoe had taken a small house near the harbor. He had been selected to go, together with two other Jews of position, to Greece, on an embassy to the Emperor Nero, and for some time he hesitated whether he had not better relinquish this project for Benjamin's sake, now that the boy had so unexpectedly been restored to him. But his country-men insisted on the wealthy Jew from Antioch accompanying them, and he finally agreed to do so. Benjamin would dearly have liked to make the voyage with his father, but the Rabbi would not hear of it, and consigned the boy to the care of a ship-owner of some note in Caesarea.

He tried to console the weeping child by assurances that the ship-owner in question, by name Jonas, would look well after him, and he could have lessons and play games with the boys of the family. "I hope to be back," he said, "before the second or third full moon, and meanwhile Thamar will be coming to Caesarea. I have promised a large sum to a prudent and trusty messenger who will fetch her. So be a good boy and do not cry, but let me see that you are my own sensible and obedient Benjamin."

Thus the Rabbi spoke, and Benjamin, finding tears and entreaties useless, was fain to submit to his father's will. At last the day came when, with some other Jews, he went down to the harbor to take final leave of the travellers. His father kissed his forehead and blessed him once more; then he got into the boat which was to take him out to the Greek sailing vessel, which lay at anchor beside a large Roman trireme ready to start.

When the sails were spread, and with the ebb of the tide the ship glided out of the harbor with a favorable wind, the Jews waved a last farewell to the departing travellers, and then turned to go back to the town.

Jonas the ship-owner, a tall, thin man with a red beard and aquiline nose, took Benjamin by the hand, saying: "Come along, my little man, we must be going home."

Benjamin begged in his most suppliant tones, to be allowed to remain on the beach as long as the ship was visible. But Jonas, who though not unkind, was not very sympathetic, insisted on being obeyed. "The Legate and all the Roman officers will be coming down to the harbor directly, to escort the Procurator Florus, who is under arrest, to the vessel yonder. May the Lord reward him threefold for all the evil he has done to our nation and our holy city. I am not going to stand here with you, and expose myself to the raillery of the insolent soldiers. So come along."

"Oh, Paulinus and the Centurion will be going too on the trireme," the boy exclaimed. "I really must bid them goodbye. Do pray leave me here!"

Jonas frowned, and said severely: "I am not accustomed to give my reasons when I tell children what they are to do. I made an exception in this case. But I will not have you take leave of a heathen and a Nazarite. So come with me at once, if we are to keep friends."

Benjamin being an only son had been somewhat indulged. He was unused to be spoken to in that manner, and he felt it all the more, because he was still smarting with the pain of parting from his father. So he pulled his hand out of his companion's grasp, and crying out: "I do not want to be friends with you! I like Paulinus and the Centurion much better than I like you!" he rushed away from the angry ship-owner.

The strait-laced, dignified Jonas naturally did not attempt to run after the quick-footed boy; besides at that very moment the sound of horns and trumpets in a street close by heralded the coming of the Romans. So the worthy man made his way home, not in the most placid of tempers, and sent out some of his men to look for and bring back the run-away, while he laid a rod handy for use. "The Wise man saith: He that spareth the rod hateth his son, and that little rascal shall feel it," he murmured under his breath.

Meanwhile the cohort had reached the harbor and

stood drawn up in a semi-circle round a small temple dedicated to Neptune, that was there. The Legate, accompanied the Tribune and Tritonius, the Prefect of the trireme, ascended the marble steps that led into the narrow precincts of the temple, in order to scatter incense before the image of the ocean-god, and give the Priests money for a daily sacrifice. Prayers were also offered and vows made to the deities whose image formed the figure-head of the vessel. Lucius, who but a few days previously had scarcely been able to bring it over himself to offer incense to Jupiter Capitolinus, now did the same as the others as a matter of course, for in that short period ambition and lust of power had already darkened his understanding.

While this religious ceremony was being performed, Paulinus, who had been offered a free passage by the Tribune, remained outside behind the soldiers. He felt grieved, and could not understand how it was possible that Lucius, who had been so quick to comprehend the truths of Christianity and who saw their justice so clearly, could join in the worship of idols. Softly he whispered a prayer for his friend: "Lord, lay not this sin to his charge, and let not this soul, on whom Thou hast bestowed so many noble gifts, wander in the darkness of paganism."

At that moment a hand was laid gently on his arm, and Benjamin's voice was heard to say: "Well Paulinus, how grave you look! And yet you are going on the journey to the great city where the grand palaces are, and you will see the wild beasts in the amphitheatre!"

"Not only see them perhaps, but be torn in pieces by them," Paulinus replied. "You know, the Emperor has already ordered a number of Christians to be thrown to the tigers and lions."

"Is that what makes you sad? Eusebius said the Christians went to death joyfully. And now I think seriously about it, Paulinus, I would far rather go with you to Rome, at the risk of being killed by the lions, than go home tonight to that red-bearded Jonas. For if a lion killed me, I should go straight to Heaven; but if Jonas sends me supperless to bed, or beats me, as he is

quite capable of doing, his two boys Reuben and Issachar will laugh at me. How would it be if I were to beg the handsome Centurion to take me with him to Rome?"

"Think how alarmed your father would be if on his return from Greece he did not find you here. And what would your sister say, if the messenger brings her here a few days hence? No my dear boy, make amends for the disobedience of which I perceive you have been guilty, by going back to Jonas and asking him to forgive you."

"I shall not go from here as long as father's ship can be seen. Besides I want to see you and the Centurion off. What is he doing in that little house where there is a horrid naked man with a trident?"

"He is offering sacrifice—that is what makes me sad!"

"But he ought not to do that! It is a great sin. Eusebius told him so in the instruction. I shall reprove him for it," Benjamin cried indignantly.

He was as good as his word. When the officers emerged from Neptune's temple and proceeded down to the beach where the boats lay, the boy squeezed through the escort of soldiers, and said to Lucius: "I came to shake hands with you before you went. But I will not touch your hand now, since with it you have offered incense to the idol."

The Legate and the Captain laughed at this speech, the boldness of the little Jew amused them, but Lucius felt embarrassed. Had he not acted from human respect, and did not this child's loyalty to his convictions put him to shame? "You know, my little friend, that is customary among the Romans to sacrifice to the ocean-gods before starting on a voyage," he said to Benjamin.

"You know it to be a grave sin," the boy answered without relaxing his countenance.

"Well done!" said Tritonius laughing, "there is a Jew all over! He must be made High-priest, if the stiff-necked people still have a temple and an altar in a few years' time."

"At any rate, little Rabbi, we will not part bad friends, we who have always been such good friends," the Tribune answered. "Give me your hand and remember me to your fair sister."

"You are right, one must not refuse to be reconciled. Here is my hand. I will give your message to Thamar, but I shall not tell her you sacrificed to the naked man with the trident, it would vex her so much. Farewell."

Benjamin shook hands with the Tribune, and then, his arms folded over his breast, made a low bow to the Legate and the Captain. Then he slipped back to Paulinus' side and chatted with him until it was time to go on board. "God bless you and keep you, the Lord Jesus and His holy Mother protect you," said Paulinus on parting. "You must keep the law and observe all the customs that Jonas and your father enjoin on you, for they are ordained by God. But pray God every day to bring you to a knowledge of that perfect law which Jesus Christ revealed to us, and to admit you into His church by baptism. Well, I hope you will soon be with Thamar again, then I shall know you are safe. May your holy Angel be ever with you!"

"And may your Angel be with you, dear Paulinus. And when you see your uncle, who can work such wonderful miracles, greet him from me, and tell him I beg him to make my father and sister and me good Christians, and to convert the Centurion. Now go or you will be late. Come back soon."

Sorrowfully the boy gazed after the boat that was bearing his friends to the ship. Then he looked out to sea; his father's vessel had now dwindled to a white speck on the far horizon, in another minute to disappear altogether from sight. The poor child's eyes filled with tears, as with a heavy heart he turned to go to Jonas' house, where, as he was well aware, a severe chastisement awaited him.

In the interval before starting a somewhat lively scene was enacted on board the *Castor-and-Pollux*. The last boat had brought Gessius Florus, whom the Legate now gave in charge of the Tribune, who was to bring him under arrest to Rome, to answer for his conduct during his tenure of office in Palestine before the *Praetor* and Senate.

The Procurator gnashed his teeth with rage. "Cestius Gallus!" he cried, his voice quivering with anger,

"you shall pay dearly for this, and so shall this young puppy who is to accuse me in your name. Poppaea Sabina is yet alive, and my wife has gone out before me; she started as soon as the tidings of your cowardly retreat and your disgraceful defeat reached Caesarea."

"I ordered the retreat because I perceived that the troops I had with me were not sufficiently numerous to quell the insurrection that you had provoked; and because the priests found terrible auguries in the entrails of the sacrificial victims, as I can prove. Now you were dastardly enough to sacrifice the cohorts in Jerusalem intentionally."

"And pray who sacrificed four hundred valiant men in the camp at Bethoron? Did you not leave them all to be massacred, that you might escape to Caesarea without a scratch? You certainly can cast nothing in my teeth!"

"I was compelled to make the sacrifice, though with a bleeding heart, for the sake of saving the remainder of the army," Gallus answered. "Now when you fled from Jerusalem you had nothing to save but yourself and your miserable self. But why should I waste words in these mutual recriminations. You can state all your reasons before the judges in the Roman forum, and refute all the charges, affirmed on oath, which I have given to Lucius Flavius. And if there is a spark of justice left in the breasts of the judges, they will make you answer for your doings with your hearts' blood, in spite of your attempt to shelter yourself under a woman's gown. Tritonius, Lucius, all you gentlemen, I wish you a prosperous voyage! May the twin-stars guide you, and the ocean-gods bring the gallant trireme safely into the port of Ostia. Farewell!"

So saying the Legate took courteous leave of the officers and got into the boat that was waiting to take him back to land.

Tritonius immediately gave the order to start. The master of the galley-slaves took his place on the dais at the table whereon stood the water-clock, which marked the hours for relieving the oarsmen, and took up the mallet wherewith to beat time for the slaves on a kind of gong. He ran his eye over the ranks of the rowers,

who sat, chained to their benches, three men to each oar, at regular distances on either side of the ship. Their hands rested on the long, heavy oars, slung on leather bands, and with sinister, gloomy looks, they awaited the signal to begin rowing. Then the trumpet was heard, and the master's hammer fell on the sounding-board with a droning noise. At the same instant sixty oars dipped into the water, rising and falling simultaneously in even time, and the ship began to move, first slowly, then more and more quickly, like a monster fish impelled by the motion of its fins. The officers stood together on the deck, and waved the last greeting to their friends on shore.

"Look," the Captain said, "is that not Queen Berenice on the roof of Herod's palace, sending us her good wishes and waving her kerchief? By all the goddesses of Olympus, I should not have expected such condescension on the part of the proud and beautiful princess!"

Pomponius Papilio laughed. "That greeting is not intended for you or your ship, but for her darling here, Prince fortunate. Return the greeting, Tribune, out with your handkerchief!" And while Lucius went to the ship's side to return the salutation, Papilio whispered to Tritonius: "I do not know what these two, the Jewish princess and the Tribune yonder, expect from fate, but it must be something extraordinary. Eupolemos divulged this much to me, that they paid a visit together to the Egyptian sorceress, and afterwards swore mutual fidelity. We should do well to keep friends with that fellow Lucius Flavus; Circe's oracular sayings are mostly to be relied on."

Gessius Florus, who was standing near, caught the last words and laughed scornfully, saying to himself: "I wonder whether the enchantress showed him the dagger I have in readiness for him, if the puppy opposes me in any way."

Meanwhile the Castor-and-Pollux sped rapidly on her westward course. The strong arms of 120 galley-slaves were seconded by an easterly wind, and with well-filled sails the vessel cut through the dancing waves, leaving a trail of white foam upon the water. The houses of

Caesarea were speedily lost to sight, only Strato's tower, from which the little town in former days took its name, remained visible. Presently that too disappeared, as well as the blue line of the mountains of Judea, and finally the verdant summit of Carmel. In the west the sun was sinking below the waves, tinging sea and sky with roseate hues. The splendor of the scene was not without effect even upon the rough mariners; Lucius, who for a long time had seen nothing of the beauties of nature, was deeply impressed. How great and glorious must the supreme Spirit be, who with a single word could call in existence a world such as that! The sublime doctrines concerning the one God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, which he had first of all read in the writings of Philo the Alexandrian, and subsequently had heard from Eusebius' lips, recurred forcibly to his mind.

"If Thou dost really exist, most exalted, almighty Being, I adore Thee. And Thou surely dost exist! If in reality Thou dost direct the destinies of men, if Thou hast chosen me to do great things, I solemnly vow that throughout all the Roman empire all men shall hear of and know Thee, the one true God. The deities whom we have worshipped hitherto are only the forces of created nature, and as such it will be permitted to offer them an inferior cultus, subordinate to Thy service. In the person of Apollo, who is now guiding his fiery steeds to the ocean, we shall see Thy sun, which sheds light and warmth upon the earth; Neptune represents the restless sea, that links the bands together and gives clouds to fertilize the soil; Jupiter shall impersonate the rules Thou hast ordained for maintaining social order; and the other ancient gods, stripped of their personality, shall only be regarded as symbols of the powers, the benefits bestowed by Thee on mankind. Thus the belief in one supreme Deity may be united to the belief in a plurality of gods, in which we differ from the Jewish creed, and a universal religion shall be established over all the earth, fraught with happiness and blessing for the nations."

Thus Lucius endeavored to reconcile his conscience



and his passions, and persuade himself that his rejection of the teaching of Christianity was dictated by reason. At that moment he noticed Paulinus timidly approaching. He beckoned to the youth to come to him, and with an air of condescension, motioned him to a seat beside him. Then in somewhat high-sounding phrases, he justified himself for offering sacrifice to Neptune, and expounded to the youth his new-fangled system, which was to combine the belief in one God with the worship of many gods. Paulinus listened in silence, till Lucius concluded his harangue with the words: "I am not expounding this for the sake of justifying myself, but for your instruction. What do you think of my philosophy?"

Paulinus looked at him very gravely, and said: "Do you really believe in it yourself?"

"What, do you doubt my sincerity?" exclaimed the Tribune with a shade of irritation.

"You know I mean no offence. But can you possibly believe in such a system after hearing the doctrines Eusebius taught, and which your keen intellect grasped so readily?"

"But you must see the difference. If I sacrifice to Jupiter, it is not to the Jupiter of the vulgar crowd, or of our poets and priests; I do not believe in such a being, much less could I revere him as a divinity. I should sacrifice to the laws appointed by the true God to govern society, and thus my homage would in reality promote the glory of the true God."

"I see the difference, but the abominable sin of idolatry probably originated in the very way in which you propose to suppress it. In old times men sacrificed to the sun, as an act of homage to the Creator of that beneficent luminary, and they soon forgot the Creator for the creature. Do you suppose that the path of error can ever lead to the truth?"

"Yes, if one follows that path backwards, one will arrive at the truth."

"It would be a long and treacherous path! He who said: I am the way, the truth and the life, taught us a surer way, and you know that way. Besides, what view will others take of your actions, when you offer sacrifice?"

In their eyes you will be paying homage to Jupiter, whom you yourself term an adulterer. I should be ashamed of such a thing." Then Paulinus told his companion what the aged Eleazar had answered, in the time of the Machabees, when it was suggested that he should save his life by an act of hypocrisy.

Lucius had too much nobility of nature, not to see the justice of this rebuke. "Well," he answered, "in future I will openly assert in what sense my cultus is paid; then no man can call me a double-dealer."

"That again would be wrong. How would you be warranted in instituting and offering sacrifice to the powers of nature, to the beneficent gifts of God — under shapes too, so abhorrent! — since God has solemnly and expressly forbidden such worship? He Himself has ordained the service to be rendered Him: first under types and figures, declared by His servant Moses, afterwards fulfilled and perfected by His only-begotten Son. Would it not be the height of presumption for man to alter what God has instituted for His worship? God forbid that you should be guilty of such an act! O my dear Lucius, God has endowed you with excellent qualities of the intellect and the heart; do not profane them by giving admission to your arch-enemy, the spirit of pride."

Paulinus went away, leaving Lucius sorrowful. No compromise was possible, he saw that. Either one must serve God or obey his ruling passion. Once more he seemed to see the lurid glare of the diadem on Herod's brow and the crown of thorns on that of the Nazarite. Berenice offered him the one, Thamar the other. Again ambition and pride determined his choice.

The voyage was as prosperous as heart could wish. In a few days the vessel reached the island of Melita (Malta) then, rounding the southern point of Sicily, turned her prow northwards in the direction of the mouth of the Tiber. Lucius intentionally avoided being alone with Paulinus, as the latter observed to his regret. Only once, when at Melita, had he an opportunity of talking to him without any one else being present. He then told him about his uncle having been shipwrecked on that island six years previously, and tried to turn the

conversation to religious subjects. But Lucius answered evasively, and presently said: "Paulinus, you and I view these questions from quite a different standpoint. You are a Jew by birth and I am a Roman, so you think as do the Jews, and I as do the Romans. God seems to take the part of the Romans, for Rome rules the world, whereas Jerusalem is evidently doomed to destruction. But we will not dispute about this or any other subject, nor part in anything but amity. I am much indebted to you and your pious mother, and I shall be pleased to offer you hospitality under my mother's roof."

"I thank you; I am to take up my quarters with Flavius Clemens, but I shall make use of your kind offer."

"Flavius Clemens, Vespasian's brother? I have always heard him spoken of as a queer sort of fellow. Does he belong to your sect?"

"You will not make use of what you hear to his disadvantage?" the young man replied in evident embarrassment.

"No, Paulinus, I do not betray secrets. I am too proud to do that—only the other day you accused me of pride. But Gessius Florus seems to want to say something to me—excuse me a moment."

The young Levite moved away, and for the first time during the voyage the ex-Procurator accosted his hated enemy. It was only too plain what an effort it cost him to speak to him. He spoke first of the exceptionally favorable voyage they had had. Lucius answered in polite monosyllables. Then Florus coughed nervously and said: "I really do not see what advantage you will gain if I am condemned. Could you not manage to lose the papers containing the charges that the Jews bring against me? They are mere trifles, such as were trumped up against my predecessors—If you will do so I swear you shall not be the poorer for it."

The Tribune turned away without a single word. Paulinus saw the look of deadly hatred that came into Florus' eyes and he saw too that he drew a poniard from the folds of his toga with the intention of stabbing Lucius from behind. Quick as thought he rushed for-

ward and threw himself between the assassin and his victim, happily in time to turn the blow aside; but the enraged Roman foiled in his sinister design, flung him with such force against the ship's bulwarks that he was completely stunned. Tritonius came up to the assistance of the Tribune, and between them Florus was soon overpowered and bound. Then Lucius turned to the unfortunate Paulinus, and lifting him in his arms carried him down, and laid him on his own bed. A slave who possessed some knowledge of surgery, being summoned, discovered a serious wound on the back of the head. He washed it and applied cooling bandages. At length Paulinus opened his eyes; Lucius was kneeling beside him.

"You saved my life," he exclaimed with emotion. "I was within a hair's breadth of being thrown overboard with that rascal's dagger in my heart."

"It is a small thing to have saved your life, if I cannot rescue your soul from destruction," Paulinus replied.

The physician thought he was delirious, as to him he appeared to be talking nonsense. But Lucius understood what he said only too well.

Three days later the ship gaily entered the port of Ostia amid a fanfare of trumpets. The next day Lucius handed his prisoner over to the Prefect and laid the accusation before the Roman Senate. Then he hastened to the Appian Way, whither he had sent Paulinus beforehand in a litter with tidings of his arrival, to greet his mother and sister.

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## CHAPTER 32.

### Under the Maternal Roof.

Lucina, the widow of a Roman Senator, dwelt with her daughter Lucilla and a few slaves, in a small house on the Appian Way, which was pleasantly situated in a fairly large garden, adjoining the gardens of other villas. It was winter-time when Lucius returned unexpectedly to Rome, and the fine elms that shaded the house in summer were leafless; but the tall pines, the lofty cypresses, besides the dark ivy that mantled the portico and clothed the walls of the house, defied the wintry blast. Thus the home of his childhood, brightened by the kindly light of a December sun, presented an attractive aspect to Lucius when, somewhat late in the afternoon, having despatched his most pressing business, he sprang from his horse at the garden gate.

Carpophorus the gardener greeted him with a pleasant smile, and took his horse away to the stables. And before Lucius had got halfway down the gravel path leading up to the house, his sister ran out to meet him, while her little dog Ursulus barked in joyous welcome.

"Just look Lucilla, how you have grown! And the Graces have tinged your cheeks with a lovely color," the Tribune said, as he kissed his pretty sister.

"Do not talk rubbish about the Graces, Lucius; the pleasure of seeing you again has brought the color to my face. You have grown stouter and more manly during the past year. And what a beautiful coat of mail you have got! So you have been made Tribune! But come now, we must not keep Mother waiting."

But the little black poodle, indignant that no notice was taken of him by his old friend, could not refrain from jumping up until he had obtained a kind word and a caress; then he bounded off to the house door, where Lucina was standing to receive her son. The joy of her heart shone forth in her eyes, but her lips could only

utter the words: my Lucius! When she had embraced him tenderly, and scanned him with maternal pride, she led him into the house and lifted the helmet from his curly locks. "The sun of Syria has tanned your brow," she said, "but your eyes are still the same. God be praised that you have come back to me unspoilt! Hang up your sword and cloak and let me unbuckle your breastplate. How splendid it is! That is not the one you used to wear."

"No, mother, this was given to me by Queen Berenice. I shall have a great deal to tell you about her. In fact I have had plenty of adventures during the past year."

"We shall much enjoy hearing of them," his mother replied. "But now go and change your things. You will find a new tunic in your room. Lucilla embroidered the border. Berenice," she continued in a somewhat altered tone, while she fumbled at the fastenings of the armor, "Berenice, I fancy I have heard the name mentioned as that of one of the new order of women, who get themselves divorced at their pleasure, and one who has beguiled more than one man. I am sorry that you should accept a present from a lady of that sort."

"O mother you judge her too harshly. Berenice is a noble minded woman. She was, it is true, separated from her first husband, a regular barbarian. But he is dead now, and the most correct Roman matron must allow she is free to dispose of her hand."

"You must not bring this eastern Princess to this house as my daughter-in-law," his mother added with a forced smile.

"No chance of that at present," the Tribune replied. "Berenice would not thank you for such accommodation as this modest dwelling affords. But before I go to dress, let me inquire after my travelling companion. He got here safely?"

"Quite safely. What a nice young fellow he is. Your letter telling us that he saved your life was not needed to ensure for him a kind reception. I sent directly for Galenus the physician; he hopes to effect a cure, as the lad's youth is in his favor. Just now there

is someone with him who will administer a more powerful remedy than any Galenus may prescribe."

While Lucina was still speaking, a door opened and an old man of venerable appearance stepped out into the *atrium*. He was not above the average height, and his head, bald with the exception of a few snow-white locks on his brow and temples, was slightly bent. Beneath his thick eyebrows there gleamed a pair of bright eyes, which betokened an energy and strength of soul, a fire, not the glow of passion, but a radiance tempered by gentleness and humility. The furrowed cheeks told a tale of sorrow and care. A short curly beard of silvery whiteness covered the lower part of the face.

As he entered the venerable old man uttered the salutation: "The peace of the Lord be with you!"

"And with thy spirit," Lucina responded, bowing respectfully.

The words were familiar to Lucius' ear. He had heard that greeting from Eusebius' lips, and Paulina used to make the same response. Then it suddenly struck him that in passing through the hall, he had missed a bronze statue of Diana that used to stand there. Was it possible that his mother and sister had embraced the faith which he fought against with all the powers of his soul?

While these thoughts were passing rapidly through his mind, Lucius was accosted by the stranger, who said: "Peace be with thee also, most valiant Tribune!" Then fixing on him a searching glance, he added gravely: "There is a conflict going on in your breast between light and darkness. We will pray the Lord of Light to make your good Angel prevail. May He look upon you with His grace, as He once did upon me!" And the old man turned away quickly, for his eyes were full of tears.

Lucilla kissed his hand respectfully, and both she and her mother conducted him out of the house. As he parted from them in the garden, he said: "I will bring the medicine of the soul to your patient tonight: see that all is made ready. He is the nephew of my greatest friend and Brother in Christ, Paul, who for several months has been in prison for Christ's sake. I shall

send him word that his sister's son is here, and ask him to pray for his recovery, for Paul's supplications when he raises his fettered hands to Heaven, are far more powerful than my poor prayers."

"O Peter, supreme Pastor of Christ's flock," the matron exclaimed, "whose petitions shall avail more than yours? I beg you to intercede for my son that he may be brought into the fold."

"The Lord will give him to your tears and prayers. His divine heart has never been able to withstand a mother's entreaties for her child. Remember the young man at Naim; He gave him to his mother. And invoke the aid of the Mother of the Lord, then you will be more certain of being heard."

Thereupon Peter took leave of Lucina and her daughter, making the sign of the cross over them. Then barefoot, with a simple staff in his hand he wended his way to the dwelling of the Senator Pudentius. Not one of the hundreds who either on foot, on horseback or in chariots, thronged the Appian Way at that time of day, ever suspected that the poorly-clad but vigorous old man was the first of the long line of spiritual rulers, who as the Vicegerents of Christ would lay down the law in ecclesiastical matters to Rome and the whole wide world.

That evening Lucius avoided asking any questions which might lead to religious discussions, and whilst relating his adventures in Jerusalem he touched very lightly on the subject of Tamar and his sojourn in Paulina's house. They parted for the night earlier than usual, for Lucina knew her son was fatigued, and she had to make arrangements and secretly prepare for the nocturnal visit of the priest.

Lucius soon fell asleep and never dreamed that shortly after midnight Peter entered the house. The matron Lucina and her daughter received him in the atrium, which was lighted up as for a festive occasion, and conducted him into the sick room, where a table stood ready, covered with a clean linen cloth and on it two gold lamps. The old man placed the gold pyx which he most reverently drew from the folds of his toga on



the table, then he and all who were present, adored their Saviour hidden beneath the eucharistic veil. After a fervent Act of Faith in Christ's presence in the sacred Host, an Act of Hope and Charity, he took the Blessed Sacrament out of the pyx and advanced to the sick man's bedside saying: "The body of Christ." "Amen," Paulinus responded, and with touching devotion received the mysterious food of the soul. The priest also administered Holy Communion to Lucina and her daughter, who had prepared themselves for it during the foregoing hours of the night. For in the days of persecution the faithful used to receive the Bread of the Strong not exclusively when they assembled for divine worship, but whenever an opportunity presented itself. Peter knelt with them in prayer until break of day warned him to depart.

When Lucius at length rose, long after the sun was up, he was not a little astonished to find Paulinus sitting with his mother and sister, looking rather pale, but as he declared, quite well again. He attributed his sudden recovery to the effect of the potent medicament which he had received, and Lucius, who was always ready to believe in the potency of good and evil charms, congratulated him on his rapid restoration to health.

Presently, after Paulinus had withdrawn, Lucius said to his sister: "Look, Lucilla, what a pretty bauble I have brought you from Jerusalem;" and he handed Tamar's costly necklace to the maiden.

"Oh what splendid rubies! And what a magnificent clasp! See, Mother, how they shine and glitter!" she exclaimed.

"I have seldom seen rubies of that size," Lucina said in no slight surprise. "How ever could you purchase such an ornament, of which an empress might be proud, out of your means? I hope, Lucius, it is not part of a soldier's spoil, associated with grief and bloodshed?"

"No, Mother, I would not offer anything to my dear sister to which anything but pleasant memories cling. Besides, I did not buy it. As a matter of fact, it is not my gift, but a present from an innocent Jewish damsel, who gave me the trinket expressly for you, Lucilla."

Both mother and daughter looked at him open-eyed. Lucius laughed and said: "Of course you must needs think directly I am going to be married! That is the first thing that comes into the heads of you women. Well, it might perhaps have come to that, but now there is no question of such a thing. Thamar, who, by the bye, is really very like you, Lucilla, only her eyes are dark, has gone over to the sect of the Christians, which the Jews hate as heartily as the Romans do. I daresay I shall have time this evening to tell you the whole story. Now I must go into the town and pay the most pressing visits. Farewell then, until Hesperus lights his torch once more."

The Tribune dressed very carefully, before going to pay his respects to a whole list of influential personages. His mother was sorry to see him go. She begged him at any rate not to accept invitations to the house of Tigellinus, and others whom she named, assuring him that he would never forgive himself if he had once been in such company. But Tigellinus was Prefect of the Praetorians, the Imperial Guard, and a special favorite of Nero! So Lucius said in a general way that he would see if he could refuse, and went his way forthwith.

The experiences of the next few days were very different to what Lucius anticipated. In vain did he make urgent representations to Tigellinus, to the Consuls, to the most influential Senators, to the Prefect and Praetor of the city, in order that the proceedings against Gessius Florus might be instituted at once, so as to set Lucius at liberty to return to the army in Palestine. It should be done, he was told at the next calends; then it was said there were too many other cases to be tried, finally Tigellinus informed him that the Emperor had issued express orders that the matter was not to be brought into Court until after his return from Greece. So the weeks and months went by. In the meantime Lucius found himself obliged, in view of his ambitious designs which for the first months Berenice took care to keep alive by her inflammatory epistles, to repeat his visits to his patrons, and he was unable to decline many invitations to banquets and festivities, where he saw and

heard much of which he could not have spoken without a blush to his mother and sister.

Thus the spring came round and with it the tidings of Nero's approaching return to Rome. At the same time Lucius heard that Cestius Gallus had fallen into disgrace and been deprived of his post; and that the Emperor had appointed Vespasian, the conqueror of Britain, and his son Titus Flavius to the command of the forces in Judea, to carry on the war and subjugate the Jews. On hearing this, Lucius was doubly anxious to return to Palestine, in order to bear arms and gain distinction under Rome's greatest general. But he was forced to wait, and drink more deeply of the bitter chalice, the disgust which intercourse with libertines such as Tigellinus awoke in his better nature, without giving any sign of his feelings.

At length Nero entered Rome, posing as a triumphant lover of the fine arts. Hundreds of gold and silver wreaths, the guerdon of his "divine song," his performances on the guitar, which he, the envied rival of Orpheus, had won on the stage of every theatre in Greece, were borne before him with ostentatious pomp. He himself followed, in the guise of Apollo, a harp in his left hand, seated on the chariot of Augustus. A purple mantle starred with gold hung upon his shoulders; the olympian crown was on his head, the pythian<sup>1)</sup> he held in his right hand. All Rome, patricians and plebians, flocked to meet him, clapping their hands in applause, and greeting the abominable wretch, the murderer of his mother and his spouse, with acclamations of a "god! a god!"

Lucius, who had gone out with Tigellinus and the Senate to meet the returning ruler, joined in the applause, though not without an inward sense of shame, as his mother had foretold would be the case. But the slave of pride must submit to humiliations, humiliations deeper and more numerous than are required of the humblest follower of the God who humbled Himself to become man. As his reward, Lucius was invited to take his place as a guest at the palace that evening, where he had the honor of bending still lower in the dust

<sup>1)</sup> Suetonius Nero 25.

before the monster who wore the imperial crown. The wreaths and prizes, to the number of 1808, which Nero had brought back from Greece, were exhibited; Nero was greeted as all-victorious, and it was proposed to demolish all the statues of former conquerors and erect in their place temples and altars to the divine Nero, since in his person Rome had defeated Greece in the arts. All present applauded the suggestion; Lucius with the rest.

However he could not succeed in feigning the same delight and admiration as did his fellow-guests, so that Nero could read on his countenance the half-disgust that he felt at heart. He inquired of Tigellinus, who occupied the place of honor at the Emperor's right hand, who the young Tribune was; then he said aloud that he thought he would presently repair to Jerusalem himself, and endeavor to tame the stubborn Jews with the magic of his song. What, he asked, did Lucius say to this project?

The Tribune answered that it was a feat greater than the divine Orpheus had accomplished, since he only tamed wild beasts with his melodious strains.

"Then you think that is beyond my power?" Nero asked, irritated by the somewhat evasive answer.

"There is nothing beyond the power of a god to accomplish," Lucius responded, with a bow.

This reply was not sufficiently servile to content the tyrant, and Tigellinus saw that he was displeased. However he did not press the Tribune any further, for just at that juncture singers and dancing-girls entered. The nine fairest maidens, representing the nine muses, came forward and paid homage to the Emperor as a musician who distanced the God of Delphi himself. Thereupon Nero called for his golden lyre and placed himself at the head of the nine. Singing and dancing to the notes of the lyre he led the dance in presence of his guests. A storm of applause rewarded the imperial comedian.

On the afternoon of the following day Lucius was sitting in the garden behind his mother's house. He felt sickened of all around him and half weary of his life. Was it a boon worth striving after, to rule such a nation

of slaves as the Roman people had become since the time of Augustus. He could no longer endure himself in Rome. Now that the Emperor had returned, he would urge the speedy hearing of Florus' case, and when the trial was ended, he would sail with the first ship to rejoin the army. If he was really destined to rule the empire, he would win the sceptre with the sword, and not by adulation and flattery of the Senators and this low-minded people. What a revolution he would make, how thoroughly he would cleanse these Augean stables if he ever gained the crown fate seemed to promise him! The simplicity of Roman manners in olden times should be introduced again. Certainly Berenice dearly loved display, but he would persuade her to make it her pride to be known as the one who re-established the simplicity of Roman women as it was in by-gone days. She had not answered his last letter, though she had been such a good correspondent, and she knew how eager he was to hear how matters were progressing in Palestine. He had learnt from another source that Vespasian and Titus were massing their forces in the vicinity of Ptolemais, and that the wary old general had decided to subdue the provinces before marching on the chief city. He could not account for her silence.

His mind occupied with these thoughts, Lucius sat by the spring in the garden, shaded by the lilac trees in full bloom, when his sister joined him. Lucius held out his hand, and welcoming her with a smile, made her sit down upon the stone seat beside him.

"You look pale and fatigued, Lucius," she said. "You really ought not to injure your health by being up so late at night. Mother and I are quite grieved at the life you are leading lately."

"I daresay you are right, my wise little sister. I have just made up my mind to begin a new life as soon as I can. But to do that I must go away from here. If one is in Rome, it is impossible not to do as the Romans do."

"Oh, I know many men who do not; for instance, there is your travelling companion, Paulinus."

"Yes, yes, I know all that. He is a Christian, like you and Mother, and you would have me adopt that

strange creed of yours. But I consider it wiser to preserve my allegiance to the beliefs of my country and only avoid what is objectionable and exaggerated in them. To take an example, when I was a child, this fountain used to trickle out of an urn held by a nymph. Why should that elegant form have been removed to make room for this unsightly lion's head, from whose mouth the water is ejected into the basin? And you know also that the Emperor prohibits the profession of your religion under pain of death. I tremble for you and Mother, the more so because Paulinus, as I am perfectly well aware, associates with the leading men of your sect, and the consequence will be that the spies of the city Prefect will be put on the scent and bring trouble into our peaceful home. Yes, you may look. I know for certain that the old man whom you call Peter, and whom I see here much more often than I like, is Chief Pontifex, or whatever it may be, of you Christians."

Lucilla was about to reply, when the branches were put asunder, and to Lucius' astonishment and alarm, Tigellinus stood before them.

"Pardon me, fair lady," said the libertine, looking at Lucilla with an impudent stare, "pardon me, the imperial behests brook no delay. That is my excuse for coming unannounced to the spring where the gardener told me I should find our valiant Tribune alone. Pray, madam, do not leave us." He then told Lucius that Florus' trial was fixed for the Ides of May, and the Emperor himself would be present; adding: "There is a stroke of good fortune for you, to be allowed to plead before the divine Nero himself! That is why I hastened hither, as your good friend, to bring you the welcome tidings myself. You have not long to prepare your speech. I am afraid, however that I have intruded upon a lover's meeting. . ."

"You are mistaken, Prefect, this is my sister, with whom I was having a quiet talk," said Lucius, abruptly interrupting the Emperor's favorite.

"Indeed, your sister!" rejoined Tigellinus, looking at the blushing maiden still more boldly. "But really it is a great shame of you to hide so charming a flower

in this jealous way. By all the Graces! what a lovely creature! And she was not among the wives and daughters of the Senators who assembled to greet the divine Nero! I have an eye for feminine beauty, and I should have remarked so rare a gem. Fie, fie, you know too how the Emperor notices lovely women."

Lucius did know that, only too surely, and in well-founded alarm about his sister he debated within himself whether it would not be best to run Tigellinus through with his sword, before he could direct Nero's attention to Lucilla. It cost him an effort to suppress his anger, and he sought to get rid of the unwelcome visitor as speedily as possible. At length Tigellinus took his departure, not over-well pleased with the reception the Tribune had given him, and his inability to get a civil word out of the fair Lucilla.

"The spy and scoundrel," Lucius exclaimed, as soon as the Prefect was gone. "I wonder whether he played the eavesdropper, as likely as not he heard me reproach you for being a Christian."

"And he overheard what you so imprudently mentioned about venerable Peter!" his sister rejoined in sorrowful accents.

"Confound the fellow! That would give him a plausible excuse for getting you into his clutches. But whether he overheard us or no, all the same you will not be safe here for another hour. We must take measures at once to baffle that brute."

On learning what had occurred, Lucilla's mother immediately decided to retire with her daughter to a small country-house among the Sabine hills which belonged to them, and the necessary packing was speedily accomplished. When the litters which were to convey them thither stood ready, she said to her son: "Lucius, my boy, this is not a time to say much, I can only commend you to God and His good Angels. But one thing I must say: Perhaps you have been surprised that during all this time I have never spoken to you about the Christian religion, although you are aware that my fondest wish is that you should share our happiness in belonging to it. I said nothing, because I saw you were

not in the right dispositions to follow the call of truth, and I feared lest I should increase your responsibility. But now that I am going away, and do not know whether I shall ever see you again on earth, I entreat you to reflect on this, how short this life is, and how endless is eternity. Whatever your dreams for the future may be, and God knows I wish all that is best for you, you can only enjoy whatever you attain for a few short years. Live so that you may be happy hereafter—you know what I mean."

"Certainly, mother, do not trouble yourself about me. I will come and see you among the Sabine hills before I leave Italy." So saying he kissed his mother and helped her into the litter. Just as the bearers were starting she called to him again, and saying she had almost forgotten something, she whispered to him that Peter, Linus, and some other venerable personages were going to meet at her house that night to deliberate upon the course to be pursued, as now that the Emperor had returned, the persecution was sure to break out afresh. Would Lucius, she asked, be so very kind as to apprise Paulinus as soon as possible of what had happened, or himself to give warning to the Senator Pudentius and Flavius Clemens, lest they should fall into the hands of their persecutors. Lucius promised to fulfil this request, and with a few more kind words they parted.

The travellers were scarcely out of sight before Lucius, when he considered the situation calmly, perceived how hazardous it would be for him, if the Christian sect were arrested in his father's house. He therefore determined not to await Paulinus' return, but to go himself at once to Pudentius. So leaving a tablet containing a few words of vague warning addressed to Paulinus with the porter, whom he ordered to keep the garden gate locked, he hastened on his way.

He was kept waiting a long time in the hall of Pudentius' house. It was evident that the young officer, who had been seen in the company of the Emperor, of the Prefect, and other declared enemies of the Christian faith, was regarded with no little suspicion. And when he asked for Peter, his presence created alarm, so that



he saw it would have been wiser to wait till Paulinus came back, as he was well-known in the house. Presently Pudentius made his appearance; he was greatly startled by the news Lucius came to convey. Peter was gone to visit the sick and prisoners, and most probably he would look in at Lucius' villa on his way back. Accordingly the Senator sent out messengers in various directions, and himself went forthwith to Flavius Clemens, to give the alarm to Linus and several others whom he knew to be there.

Lucius wended his way home with a presentiment of approaching misfortune. Night had already closed in; and only the feeble light of a crescent moon now and again looked through the thick curtain of clouds that covered the heavens. On the Appian Way he encountered a good many carriages and litters, taking guests to entertainments in the city. The red glare of torches, held aloft by slaves who ran beside the various conveyances, only rendered the surrounding gloom more impenetrable. When Lucius reached the house the garden was quite dark. He listened; all seemed quiet, there was not a light in any of the windows. The garden gate was only put to, though he had given strict orders that it was to be locked. That made him feel rather uneasy, but then old Carpophorus was apt to be forgetful. After listening a little longer he stepped into the garden, and was in the act of closing the gate behind him, when he was seized by two strong arms, and at the same time a cloth was stuffed into his mouth, so that he could not speak and could scarcely breathe. In vain he struggled. His captors were evidently old hands, who knew their work.

"There," one of them said to the other, "here is another of them. "You see, comrade, we shall have plenty more presently, and we get ten sesterii a head."

"That might be, if you had not been such a fool as to let that little Jew escape, he will keep the birds out of our net," the other replied.

Lucius was taken into the house, where he found the gatekeeper and the other servants bound hand and foot in one of the rooms at a distance from the highway. At

the first glance he recognized in one of the captives the old man whom his mother had called by the name of Peter. He was heavily ironed, but he smiled pleasantly at the Tribune, as if to intimate that the chains he wore were more to him than all the decorations the world could give. Tigellinus, who was busily engaged in rummaging in a cupboard, turned when Lucius was brought in, and a hideous grin contorted his features. But he had the cloth taken out of his mouth, so that the Tribune was able to ask, on whose authority the Prefect had forced his way into the house and treated him in that manner?

"By the divine Emperor's orders. Let me tell you Nero is downright angry to find that he has had at his table one who harbors the Christians, or possibly is one of that accursed sect in disguise. My search has already proved that your mother and sister are Christians. You will have to tell us where they are in hiding. Moreover these tablets, which you left in the porter's charge, afford ample evidence that you wished to assist the enemies of the gods and the Emperor to elude the arm of justice. Well, at any rate I think I have taken a prize in that old man, for whom we have long been on the lookout. And very agreeable consequences all this will have for you, as you will see presently."

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## CHAPTER 33.

### In Nero's Circus.

When day dawned, the prisoners were conducted to Nero's circus, the basement of which afforded space for hundreds of dungeons. Tigellinus had, to his great annoyance, made no further capture, and Lucius had the satisfaction of knowing that in accordance with the wish his mother expressed, he had been the means of warning and saving many of her fellow-christians.

Nevertheless it was in a very despondent mood that he walked along by Peter's side with his hands bound behind him, and he sighed audibly, as he crossed the *pons triumphalis* to the Vatican, where stood the immense circus constructed by Caligula and Nero. His imagination had pictured to him a very different manner of passing through the Appian Way.

The aged saint at his side sought to cheer and encourage him, saying: "Do not be downcast, my son; our path is one to victory. You do not understand this at present, but the day will come when you will give God thanks for having led you by this way. Through the cross to the crown."

Presently the old man went on, as if musing aloud: "Here in the Agrippine Gardens and in the circus whither we are being led, three years ago many hundreds suffered a cruel death for the sake of the Lord Jesus. I saw the obelisk there, that stands out of the arena, illumined by the light of the horrible 'living torches.' Countless victims fell around its base. But after a few hours of agony they entered upon everlasting joy and glory. Now for nearly three years they have already been exulting and singing Alleluia, and their jubilation will know no end. True indeed are the words my brother Paul wrote: That which is momentary and light worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. O dearest Lord, who didst die on the

cross for me, grant that I may die with Thee and for Thee!"

His lips moved awhile in silent prayer; then raising his eyes with thankful gladness to Heaven, he added: "Now what the Lord predicted is come to pass: 'When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee and lead thee whether thou wouldst not!'<sup>1)</sup> The flesh, it is true, is timorous and unwilling to suffer, but the spirit conquers in the strength of the Lord."

The circus was reached just as the first rays of the sun lit up the top of the obelisk. Tigellinus, who was walking on in front, turned to Lucius and said scornfully: "Now, Tribune, take a good look at the sun and sky and the fair gardens all around; it may be a long time before you can again enjoy sunshine and fresh air and the like—unless you have good sense to decide upon delivering your little sister into the hands of the divine Nero, which would be the means of securing her happiness and your own prosperity. Well, well, every man finds Heaven in his own will. And we shall know how to hunt out the damsel."

To this speech Lucius returned no answer but a look of supreme contempt. They then entered by a door into a vaulted hall, which served as a guardroom. When Tigellinus had said a few words to the jailer he made a mocking bow and departed. Tigrinus the jailer, a former gladiator, who was called Cyclops on account of having lost an eye in fighting with a Teuton prisoner in the arena, a heavily-built, morose-looking fellow, rose reluctantly from the morning potation in which he was indulging with his comrades.

"These christian dogs leave one no rest day or night," he grumbled. "There will soon be no room left for an honest robber or cut-throat. Pass the jug again, or you fellows will have guzzled it all before I come back." So saying he raised the pitcher to his lips and drained it himself.

Then coming forward he looked the captives over with his one eye, remarking to his myrmidons: "All of the usual stamp! Poor creatures, scarcely worth throw-

<sup>1)</sup> St. John 21, 18.

ing to the Numidian lions. So that is the chief of these worshippers of an ass? We will do him the honor of giving him a cell all to himself. That bag of bones may have been all very well in past times, but it would not do now for a combat in the arena."

"It will hold together for the death of the cross, my friend," the old man answered pleasantly.

"Is that what you hanker after? Well I must say I have always regarded crucifixion as the most ignominious death that the devil ever invented. And I have had considerable experience in that line. To be the prey of a lion is nothing, it is over in a minute, and to be burnt at the stake is not much more protracted. But to be scourged so that your flesh is torn to fragments, then the nailing and hanging up—the torture often lasts whole days and nights! That would not be very choice. However if it is to your taste, old man, I will see what I can do. No one shall say that Cyclops does not humor his clients."

Then the one-eyed man caught sight of the Tribune. "By Hercules, a fine fellow! I should like to match him with a gladiator. Are you too a Christian?"

"No," Lucius answered, "as you see, I am a Tribune. I demand to be taken before the Praetor. I was seized in my own house through an underhand trick of that rascal Tigellinus. And even if it had been done by the Emperor's command, I would see if there was not justice in Rome—"

"Spare your breath, my brave Tribune, till you can speak in the Forum. But I am sorely afraid you will be spared that exertion, if you have the all-powerful Prefect of the Praetorians and the divine Caesar for your enemies. Of course such a fine-feathered bird must have a particularly fine cage. Light the torches, Gannio. Now come on."

Tigrinus proceeded along the vaulted passages which ran beneath several of the tiers of seats of the circus, lighting the way for the prisoners to follow, while Gannio brought up the rear. "We will show the Christians the Numidians, and some of the other gentle animals," he said. "The beasts scent their prey, and it will furnish the Christians with pleasant dreams."

Accordingly he lead the way to the basement, where the wild beasts were confined, and held his torch before the cages, so that the light shone between the iron bars. A couple of panthers, scared by the glare of the torch, slunk away growling ominously; a huge bear rose up on his hind legs with a snarl, opening his wide jaws so as to exhibit his white teeth; a wild bison whetted his antlers on the stone, and made as if he would rush against the barriers. Tigrinus spoke coaxingly to each of the savage animals, telling them they would soon meet the prisoners again in the arena. To the Numidian lions his manner was almost affectionate; in reply the largest among them got up and shook his shaggy mane, uttering a tremendous roar. The Cyclops laughed, and applauded the ferocious beast; while Peter thought of the "roaring lion" against whose vigilance and fury he frequently urged the faithful to be on their guard.

At a short distance from the cages, the jailer thrust Lucius' servants into a gloomy dungeon. Their master tried to encourage them with the hope of a speedy release; they thanked him, but they seemed to derive more consolation from a few words addressed to them by the venerable Peter, promising them victory with Christ's help. Peter himself was consigned to another dark cell, only for the present, he was told, as the Prefect had said he was soon to be transferred to the Mamertine prison.

The old man's bonds being then loosed, he laid his right hand on Lucius head, saying: "Farewell, my son. I will pray for you, and I am certain that for your mother's sake God will not withhold His grace from you. Requite it by love to the brethren. Peace be with you."

"Now, have done, will you," urged the impatient jailer. "Really I can scarcely believe you are not a Christian also," he said to Lucius, as he locked the prison door.

"It is almost enough to make me one to see how patient they are, and in what a shameful way they are treated," the Tribune replied.

"They are treated in the way they like best, and which the divine Nero commands. They seem to take

pleasure in death and torture. Did you not observe how the old man's eye brightened when he spoke of being crucified?"

"I noticed it, it is marvellous!"

"It is the black art. At their mysteries they eat the flesh of a child, and as soon as they have swallowed a morsel, they are ready to bear any torture, even women and children."

The Cyclops dismissed the attendant and conducted the Tribune up a flight of stone steps into a more airy gallery. Here he paused and said: "In consideration of your rank, Tribune, and because I have no doubt you would be willing to pay something for it, I shall give you the best accommodation at my disposal, that is, of course, as long as your funds hold out. The charge for this room is ten sesterii (about twenty pence) a day."

"Take this ring and make an end of the matter. The stone alone is worth several thousand sesterii," Lucius replied, disgusted with the covetousness of the man, drawing a ring from his finger.

"Very well, I will sell the ring and keep an account, how long the proceeds will cover the rent," the Cyclops rejoined, putting the ring into his pocket. "Here are the rooms, on the right. There is an ante-room occupied just for the present by a prisoner, a quiet, unassuming man, like all these Christians. He is only awaiting the execution of his sentence, he is as good as condemned to death. He will not be in your way, or at any rate not for long."

So saying the jailer opened a door, and showed the way through a narrow, pitch-dark apartment, in which there was no aperture to admit air or light. The atmosphere was so foul that Lucius involuntarily held his breath. On a bundle of straw there sat a man, who turned towards them in surprise as they entered. His countenance was pale and emaciated, but Lucius thought he had never seen such intelligent-looking eyes. And his broad, well-developed forehead—surely those were not the features of a low-born criminal! The man would have graced the professional chair in some school of philosophy; that miserable dungeon was certainly no fitting place for him.

"A fellow-sufferer, perhaps a brother in the faith," the prisoner said, addressing Lucius with a winning manner. "My kindest greeting to you, whoever you may be. May God support you in your affliction."

"I thank you, but I am not a brother, if by that you mean a Christian," Lucius replied, while the jailer busied himself with unlocking the door that led into the adjoining cell.

"Still I may call you a brother, as we are both children of the same Father in Heaven, and as one in trouble and tribulation you are doubly dear to me." So saying the prisoner rose, not without difficulty, to his feet, and held out his hand, heavily fettered though it was, to the Tribune, who as he grasped it could not help feeling humane compassion for the captive stranger.

Meanwhile the Cyclops had unfastened the door, and he now conducted Lucius into the adjoining apartment. Compared with the sepulchre-like cell he had just passed through, it had an aspect of tolerable comfort. It was extremely dark, but a narrow aperture in the massive stone wall sufficed for purposes of ventilation, and admitted enough light to enable one to see one's surroundings.

"Well, how do you like your new quarters, valiant Tribune? We have no carpets and tapestries here, it is true, and no soft cushions, but a warrior like you knows how to dispense with such things."

The Tribune expressed himself as quite satisfied with the accommodations provided for him.

The jailer continued: "You have not yet noticed a great advantage in this apartment, which is really princely of its kind. Come and stand on this stone and look through the opening, it commands a good view of the interior of the circus, which is worth at least ten sesterii a day. Straight before you is the great obelisk, and the four marble cones, on which many a charioteer splinters the wheels of his chariot or breaks his own neck. And exactly opposite is the covered balcony where the Emperor and the Court have their seats. Therefore for the days when the games are on, I should think myself letting you have it cheap at twenty sesterii.



Think what a pleasure it will be for you to be able from this point of vantage to behold the divine Nero, and your great friend, Prefect Tigellinus."

To all this laudation Lucius answered not a word. All he did was to ask the jailer for writing materials, in order that he might let some of his friends know where he was. He also inquired whether they would be allowed to visit him.

The Cyclops replied that he would first have to find out whether they cared to visit him. "Those fools of Christians, he said, do so constantly, and I pocket many a gratuity in consequence. But wise people prudently leave their friends alone, when they have incurred the displeasure of the divine Nero. If you pay me well I will procure as much papyrus or parchment for you as you may want, and see that your epistles reach your friends, if any of them remain faithful to you now that you have the Emperor and the all-powerful Tigellinus for your enemies."

Lucius felt the justice of this remark, and among all his so-called friends, he could not think of one who would have the generosity to keep to him. Paulinus occurred to his mind, he could send him a message through Pudentius, but by doing so might he not bring suspicion both on the friend, to whom he owed his life, and the Senator. No, he would not incur that risk. He would draw up a memorial to the Praetor, and beg that he might be brought to trial without delay. A speedy death—provided a Roman judge saw anything worthy of death in his conduct regarding his mother and sister—would be preferable to being buried alive in that foul dungeon.

The jailer, going to fetch the writing materials, was in the act of locking the door behind him, when Lucius requested him to leave it open. In this he was actuated by compassion for the unhappy prisoner in the dark ante-chamber; he wished to share with him the little light and air admitted by the aperture in the wall.

The Cyclops laughed and said: "One might almost think you were a Christian. Every sensible Roman would have told me to fasten it securely. The stench

of that hole is insupportable, and if you like such odors you are welcome to them. Only do not ask me to take the chains off that old man. He is the worst sorcerer of all that brood of devils."

The jailer departed and Lucius set the door between his cell and that of his companion in misfortune wide open. The prisoner thanked him courteously for his kindness, and greeted the dim light that penetrated into the apartment with a few words of heartfelt gratitude to the Author of all light, who sent His Son, the Light of the world, to dispel the darkness of the earth, to bring light and life to the blind mortals who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. "The darkness yet wrestles with the light, and the conflict will continue until the dawn of the unending day, which will witness the triumph of light and the ultimate and eternal overthrow of darkness. Then woe betide the children of darkness, they will be consigned to everlasting night. Victory and salvation to the children of light; they will dwell with God, the Light eternal, and illumined by His brightness, they will shine as stars for ever and ever. God grant that such may be your portion, my friend!"

That is another specimen of eastern exaggeration, the Tribune thought, more bewildered than pleased by this rapturous outburst. He answered somewhat coldly and was about to cross to the other side of his apartment, when the prisoner asked the name of his benefactor. On hearing it, he exclaimed: "Lucius! That comes from *lux*, light. I trust you will become a *Lucidus*, one who is enlightened, who enlightens. *Nomen et omen*, you Romans say. May your name be to you a portent of future happiness."

A prison warden entered, bringing the promised writing materials, and Lucius seated himself close to the loophole in the wall in order to compose his epistle to the Praetor, although he had little hope that it would have the desired result. That done, he threw himself down on his bed and meditated on the prospect before him. Was this to be the close of his career? Were all the dazzling pictures which the Caesarean sybil had conjured up to his enchanted gaze, vain and deceptive

phantoms? What would Berenice say, if he could acquaint her with his actual position? Would she not come in person to Rome, in order to plead for his release? It is not easy for a man to part with his cherished hopes of glory and happiness, and the Tribune clung with a convulsive tenacity to those which he had been led to form. He resolved to write to the Princess, and make any sacrifice to get the letter delivered. Who knows, he asked himself, whether the violence done to me may not prove an occasion for dethroning the tyrant, and that by means of Berenice's influence. At the same time he felt very uneasy about his mother and sister, fearing lest Tigellinus might have succeeded in laying hands on the two fugitives.

At first he felt little inclination to converse with his fellow-prisoner. The epistle to Berenice took some time to write, as he was anxious to put forward every motive likely to work on her ambition, and incite her to take prompt action. But when the letter was finished he tore it up, for the thought struck him that very probably the jailer would place it in Nero's hands, and it might be employed against himself and his patroness as proof of a treasonable intrigue being carried on. So he only wrote a few lines, informing her of the fact of his incarceration. If Berenice takes no steps on the receipt of this intelligence, I want no more help from her, he said to himself.

Whilst these thoughts were passing through his mind, he heard the outer door opened, and a familiar voice exclaimed, addressing his fellow-prisoner: "Give me your blessing, Uncle. At last I have succeeded in obtaining access to you by means of a golden key! Really this jailer is constantly raising his demands, they are becoming too exorbitant."

"You ought not to spend the alms of the faithful in procuring a pleasure for yourself and for me, my dear nephew. You know how needy the brethren are here, and then remember the community in Pella," the prisoner replied in a tone of gentle reproof.

The visitor was none other than Paulinus, whom Lucius had recognized at once. "I cannot help it, if

you do scold me," he continued. "Aquila gave me the money expressly for this purpose. The good tent-maker and his wife Priscilla and all the rest salute you, and beg you to pray for them. Linus wanted to come himself, but the community would not let him, lest they should be left quite fatherless. He has taken the helm now that Peter is in prison."

"Has Peter been apprehended?" Paul exclaimed. "May God in His mercy soon set him free, if that is necessary for the well-being of the Church, as He delivered him out of Herod's power. When and how did it happen? Where is he now?"

"We do not know for certain. Some say he is in the Mamertine prison, others think he is here. He was arrested in the house of the matron Lucina, and the Tribune about whom I told you, was taken prisoner at the same time, though he is not a Christian."

"The Tribune Lucius Flavus? Why that is my dear, generous fellow-prisoner! Come hither, Lucius, my good friend, and greet your travelling-companion!"

The Tribune was only waiting for this invitation to come forward; he welcomed Paulinus joyfully, and inquired what had become of his mother and sister. To his relief he was told that they had escaped in safety. He was then about to withdraw into his own apartment, but Paul, with a smile, bade him remain, since he knew about the formidable "conspiracy of the Christians."

Accordingly he sat by and listened while the great Apostle gave his nephew counsels and exhortations for the Christian body in Rome. They might be summed up in two words: Confidence in God, who never forsakes His Church, and charity of the individual members one to another. All the promises made by the Lord to Peter would hold good for his legitimate successors to the end of time. For he was the rock on which the Church was built, and against which the gates of hell should not prevail; he must live on in the person of the Supreme Pastor, until the Lord Himself came to separate the sheep from the goats. Therefore they must obey Linus and his successors in the Chair of Peter. For He who had saved the little bark in the storm on the sea of

Genesaret, would certainly not withhold His assistance from the helmsman He had appointed for the guidance of the Church.

With no less insistancy did Paul urge upon the brethren the duty of mutual charity, which he, like St. John, called the Lord's commandment. A new world seemed opened out to Lucius' view. If that commandment were carried into force, a golden age of peace and happiness might be looked for, such as the universal sway of Rome could never introduce.

Only too soon did the jailer call upon Paulinus to depart. He conveyed the kiss of peace to the brethren, and the Apostle's blessing. Lucius for the first time kneeling with the others. On leaving, Paulinus promised to do his utmost to procure Lucius' release, and to carry a kind message from him to the refugees in the Sabine hills.

From that day forward the two prisoners were on altered terms. Lucius sat for the most part at the feet of the Apostle, and listened to his teaching. His doubts and objections vanished like the early hoarfrost in the spring sunshine. He was already more than half convinced, only pride and ambition had kept the light from entering his soul. He confided everything to the Apostle, unfolding to him the state of his own mind, and the sophisms wherewith he had deluded himself, after the sybil had shown him the attractive vision of the Imperial crown. He described what he had seen in the enchantress' cave, and asked how such apparitions could be conjured up.

"Perhaps by means of mirrors, and other natural artifices, perhaps by aid of the Evil one, who is every ready to fish in troubled waters," Paul replied. "But what I cannot understand is how you could attach any credence to the utterances of an phantom such as that cruel tyrant Herod—if it was indeed he who rose up from the flames of hell."

"There was something about him so terrible and majestic."

"You tell me he wore an incandescent crown and a flaming mantle. Did that diadem which he will wear to all eternity seem to give him happiness?"

"He looked gloomy and morose. I attributed the sinister expression of his features to the fact that he was compelled to revisit the earth. I imagined fire to be the natural element of disembodied spirits, in which they delighted like salamanders."

"The reprobate will burn forever," Paul answered. Then he narrated the story of the rich man, and the fate that befell him.

"How is that possible," Lucius inquired. "How can fire act upon the soul, since as you teach, it is immaterial?"

"As it is appertains to the reward of the blessed that their bodies should in their glorified state participate in the attributes of the soul, resembling it in immortality, impassibility, agility and subtlety, so on the other hand the souls of the reprobate will as their punishment be subject to that which renders matter abject; like it they will be enslaved, they will burn for ever and yet not be consumed, they will die continually and yet not cease to exist. The Lord our God is marvellous and incomprehensible in His retribution of the evil as in His recompensing of the just. Therefore we ought to have His holy fear ever present to our mind."

Lucius was deeply impressed by what he heard. He accused himself of having allowed himself to be culpably blinded by ambition, and of having believed in the illusions of the Evil one more than in the words which the thorn-crowned countenance of the Saviour had spoken to his heart. Then Paul drew him towards him affectionately, saying: "Did you consent to the stoning of the first martyr? Did you, breathing out slaughter, persecute the Church of Christ? I did both and yet God in His mercy drew me to Himself, and made me a chosen vessel to declare His name before kings and peoples. Take courage, then, my friend, bewail your sins and God will cleanse your soul by virtue of His blood in the laver of regeneration." He then explained the parable of the Prodigal to him, and Lucius left him with true compunction in his heart.

From that time Paul did not only instruct his disciple, he prayed with him. He taught him the Lord's

Prayer, in the opening phrases of which we call God our father, all men our brethren, and speak of Heaven as our home. He expounded to him the several petitions, in which we only ask for the fulfilment of our high destiny, desiring of God the means of accomplishing it, and preservation from the dangers that stand in the way of our eternal felicity. All this was to the neophyte a new system of philosophy, one utterly unknown to the sages of antiquity. Led by so able a guide, Lucius penetrated more and more deeply in the spirit of Christianity. Up to that time his conception of its teaching had been that it enforced the worship of one God in contradistinction to the plurality of the divinities of paganism. Now he perceived the contrast to go far deeper; while heathenism deified the passions and openly advocated the worship of self, Christianity required the subjugation of all fleshly lusts, and substituted self-denial and self-sacrifice for self-love and self-indulgence. While the heathen craved for riches, enjoyments, a position of command, the Christian practised detachment from earthly possessions, crucified his flesh with Christ, and gladly obeyed. The heathen was cruel and proud, whereas Christ said: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart." "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross daily."

Such is the great contrast between paganism and the religion of the Cross, and not without a severe struggle can the natural man yield to the call of grace.

Paul now initiated his disciple in the school of Christian self-abnegation. He taught him to bear the misfortune that had overtaken him, and against which his whole being rebelled, first without murmuring and then with inward patience; finally he taught him to regard it as a dispensation of a fatherly Providence, nay to acquiesce in it cheerfully as a means of imitating the suffering Redeemer. No wonder that with such an instructor, one who could say: "I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body"; "I glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and in such a place as that in which he was confined, the scholar made such rapid progress. Till then Lucius had looked forward to the days when

there would be games in the circus, when the tiers of seats above his head would be thronged with a laughing and shouting crowd; at such times he could not be got away from the loophole limited as was the view it afforded him of the arena. Now of his own accord he deprived himself of that diversion, though when he heard the crack of the whips, the stamping of horses, the roll of the chariot wheels and the plaudits of the spectators, it cost him no small effort to keep at a distance from the aperture.

Paul rejoiced to witness this self-conquest on the part of his disciple, and he rewarded him by giving him an account of his many journeys and the perils he had encountered by sea and by land. The first time that Lucius spontaneously made the sacrifice, and refrained from even looking out at the chariots as they rushed past, he said to him: "Now prepare yourself to receive Baptism. Tomorrow you shall be regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost."

The night was passed in prayerful preparation and meditation on the wondrous mystery. Then Lucius solemnly renounced the devil with all his works and all his pomps, by which he had been deluded; he professed his belief in the triune God, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who became man for us, and received baptism from the heavily-fettered hands of the Apostle.

"Rise up, child of God, now made a new creature, since you have put off the old man, and put on Christ, and with Him you have risen again." So spake Paul with holy rapture to the soldier kneeling at his feet, as he tenderly embraced him. That day was a happy one for both the teacher and his scholar. Paul next explained to him the mystery of the Holy Eucharist: "In the same night in which Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat, this is my body which shall be delivered for you."<sup>1</sup>)

How Lucius marvelled at so great a miracle and such great charity! Not a single doubt as to the truth and reality of what he was taught troubled his mind. The

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<sup>1</sup>) 1. Cor. xi. 23.



Eternal Truth had said, "This is my Body," and that was enough for him, enlightened as he was by divine grace.

And then Paul accomplished before his eyes the mystery of transubstantiation. A morsel of the bread given to the prisoners, a goblet of wine for which Lucius bartered his last jewel, furnished all that was essentially necessary. Thus the Apostle was enabled to dispense to the neophyte the Bread of Heaven, and nourished by it, his soul was filled with celestial consolation and a rich measure of grace. Born again to a new and supernatural life Lucius now exclaimed, with his Father in Christ, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

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## CHAPTER 34.

### Palms for the Valiant.

Nearly two months had elapsed since the day when Lucius was cast into prison, when, one morning towards the end of June, the jailer made his appearance in a specially good humor, telling Lucius that there was going to be a sight that day which it was worth a hundred sesterii to see. If he would promise him that sum, well and good; if not, he would shut him up all day long in the dark cell with the old fool. Lucius quietly told him he was welcome to do it, for he had no wish to witness what went on in the arena.

"What, you do not care about it? The seats are being prepared for the divine Nero, and as a pleasing little interlude between the races, to provide a change for the people, the Christian Pontifex, the old man they call Peter, is to be crucified."

"Peter to be crucified! Here in the circus!" both the prisoners cried at once.

"Aha, that fetches you! Yes, here in the circus. The hole for the cross is now being dug at the foot of the obelisk, you can hear the pickaxes and spades at work. And the funniest part of it all is that the old fool has entreated to be nailed to the cross with his head downwards, because, he says, he is not worthy to suffer in the same way as his master."

"There we see your love and your humility, O Peter, Christ's representative on earth!" exclaimed Paul, with deep emotion. "Would that I could die with you! I earnestly desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ!"

"Well, for the matter of that your wish may perhaps be fulfilled sooner than you imagine. More room must be made here, so I have sent in a list of names to the Praetor, and yours is duly inserted in it."

"Put my name down in it too! Let me die with the others, I also am a Christian," the Tribune cried.

"Is it so? Then you have actually allowed yourself to be deluded by this old fellow! Well, only have a little patience. I have sent in the list now, and as long as your money lasts, you are my lodger, for the Cyclops keeps his word. But let me tell you, the hundred sesterterii which I require for this day's entertainment will make the debit and credit account pretty equal. And if you have no more resources you cannot expect to enjoy the privilege of having such accommodation any longer, that would be intolerably unjust!"

It need scarcely be said that Lucius desired at any cost to be an eye-witness to Peter's death. When the jailer had gone away, Paul said: "Now, my son, it is for us to pray. Only by the assistance of divine grace can we hope to conquer. Not even one so eminent in sanctity as Peter is able of his own strength to come victorious out of the conflict." Then both the prisoners knelt down, to implore the help of God for themselves and their Pontiff.

Before long the hum of many voices, the footsteps of the spectators who began to fill the tiers of seats in the amphitheatre, interrupted their orisons, and apprised them that the hour of conflict was near at hand. In Nero's circus there was accommodation for 200,000 spectators; the upper tiers were filled by the populace, the lower ones being reserved for the upper classes. The latter, situated immediately above the cells occupied by our prisoners, were thronged by fashionable patricians. But in regard to unfeeling cruelty the refined and cultured readers of the Greek and Latin poets differed little from the vulgar herd above. They all were in high spirits, talking and jesting about the amusement that the crucifixion of the Supreme Head of the christian sect would afford them.

"It is a pity that this christian comedy will be played out," said an elegantly dressed young lady to her friend, as she toyed carelessly with her fan. "Of course the sect will die out now. I was so looking forward to see one of them put to death now and again instead of those contemptible slaves or brutal gladiators. This must be said for them, one sees in them neither craven fear of

death, nor the professional coolness of the gladiator whose business it is to butcher or be butchered."

"Console yourself, my sweet Selene," her friend replied; "my Father, who is Praetor,<sup>1)</sup> says the prisons are all full of these horrid creatures, whose courage in meeting death you admire so much. They steadfastly refuse to obey the Emperor's behest, and sacrifice to him or any other divinity. So we may count on a frequent repetition of today's entertainment. I confess I am curious to see how this Christian pontiff will comport himself. Perhaps he will furnish the divine Nero with inspiration for a new poem on the tortures of the giants or whatever they may be, who rebel against his sceptre."

Here comes the Emperor!

A flourish of trumpets was heard; the thousands of spectators rose to their feet; and clapped their hands.

Attended by the Praetorians the Emperor made his appearance in the place reserved for him beneath a purple baldachin, opposite to the obelisk. He wore a Grecian mantle of cloth of gold, fastened on the right shoulder by a glittering clasp, over a robe of pale rose-color. Since his return from Greece he had affected Grecian costume and manners. A splendid coronet set with jewels rested on his carefully curled locks, redolent of the choicest perfumes. By his side sat the haughty Sabina Poppaea, no less richly attired than he; on his left stood Tigellinus, the imperial favorite, much more simply clad, in order not to throw his master into the shade. Officers, consuls, government officials of high position pressed around, in the hope of getting a word, a look from the ruler whom they deified. Behind and at each side the Priests of Jupiter Capitolinus and the proud Vestal virgins took their seats.

Lucius, who at the first blast of the trumpet had placed himself at the loophole, could contemplate the Emperor and Tigellinus at his leisure. A feeling of resentment stirred within him at the sight of the author of his unjust incarceration. But he suppressed the natural ebullition of anger, and repeated the words:

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<sup>1)</sup> The Praetor held the office of chief magistrate in Rome.

"Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors." And of a truth, he was not tempted to envy the imperial tyrant, flaunting in his vain pomp, though for him the torments of hell must already have begun. The murderer of his mother and of his wife, an incendiary, guilty of the blood of thousands! Lucius saw from his uneasy expression that he sought in vain to blunt the fangs of the snakes that stung his heart. And as for that wretched Tigellinus by his side—no, not for worlds would he have exchanged places with him!

The Emperor gave the signal. There was a blast of trumpets, the barriers were removed, and six chariots, each drawn by four horses dashed on to the race-course with a noise like thunder. Lucius turned away and only counted the number of times that the chariots had to cover the course. Only once he started and looked out on to the arena in compassion, when one of the chariots broke to pieces on the granite pillar, and the agonized cry of the dying charioteer rent the air, to be drowned in a peal of contemptuous laughter from the heartless multitude. The frightened steeds, covered with foam, dragged the corpse along in the dust, while Nero expressed himself as highly displeased that such a blunderer should be allowed to enter the course in his august presence.

The races were at an end, and with an air of supreme condescension, the Emperor threw a wreath to the successful competitor. Then a mighty cry arose on all sides: The Christian Pontifex! Let him be crucified! And Nero, after a show of reluctance, gave his consent.

Lucius stepped back from his chosen post to inform Paul that the hour of Peter's final conflict had come. The Apostle needed not to be told; he was already kneeling with arms outstretched, as if in ecstasy, pleading with God on behalf of his fellow-Apostle.

The executioners now dragged out the cross and threw it down at a short distance from the obelisk, laying nails and hammer beside it. Then Peter was led into the arena. Every neck was craned to catch a glimpse of the Christian Pontifex; from every part of the vast circus eyes full of fierce hatred glared at him.

There stood the aged veteran, a cloth about his loins and an old military cloak his sole clothing, his body covered with wounds and bathed in blood. For among the Romans it was the barbarous custom to scourge before crucifying, and that horrible torture had just been inflicted on the martyr. Every fibre in his frame quivered, every muscle still palpitated; the blood trickling down stained the ground where he stood. But a supernatural joy lit up his eye, when he saw the cross prepared for him.

Tradition has recorded the words wherewith St. Andrew, St. Peter's elder brother, saluted the cross which was to be the instrument of his torture. "Hail, sacred cross, sanctified by the body of Christ! Long desired, earnestly sought, at length thou art granted to my ardent longing. Joyfully I embrace thee; take me from amongst men and give me back to my Master, in order that He who through thee redeemed me, through thee may receive me." Similar sentiments seemed to animate Peter, for with out-stretched arms he advanced to the spot where the cross lay, and kneeling kissed it with signs of delight, any words he may have uttered being drowned in the wild cries of the excited multitude.

"Salute Caesar, before thou diest!" shouted the populace. But Peter, with hands raised to Heaven, looked upwards as if unconscious of what passed around him. Was it at that supreme moment granted him to see in prophetic vision, the basilica that the first Christian emperor would, two hundred and fifty years later, erect over his tomb, on the foundations of the circus wherein he stood, or did he behold the proud cupola which from its lofty height, after fifteen centuries had passed, would dominate the Eternal city? Was it given him to read the words that would be inscribed on that obelisk: *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat*; was the golden cross gleaming on its apex revealed to his enraptured gaze?

If indeed he was consoled by such a vision, it was promptly dispelled by the stern reality of the present. The executioners seized him, tore the ragged cloak from his trembling shoulders, and cast him down on the cross.

At the first stroke of the hammer, every other sound in the circus was hushed. Every blow was heard in the prison, and Paul redoubled his supplications. A faint cry, wrung from the victim by excruciating pain, reached his ear, and he besought the Lord to accept this sacrifice for the good of His Church. Then the listeners heard a scraping sound, as the cross was dragged along the ground to the hole prepared for it, they heard the coarse imprecations uttered by the executioner in command, the thud wherewith the heavy beam fell into its place; finally they heard the outburst of hellish scorn that greeted the victim of heathen barbarity when lifted up to view, his dislocated limbs forced into their unnatural and agonizing position and transfixed by cruel nails.

To hear the laughing, clapping of hands, the shouts and savage cries on all sides of the spacious amphitheatre, no one could have believed that the assembled multitude were gazing at and delighting in the death-agony of a tortured fellow-creature. Nero lent over the balcony in front of his throne, for the purpose of getting a better view of the features of the victim, convulsed by the anguish of the last conflict. Then he threw himself back upon his cushions with a brutal laugh. He would not even, by turning down his thumb, make the usual sign to the executioner to give the sufferer the *coup de grace* to end his torture.

As soon as the cross was erected, Lucius averted his eyes, and kneeling beside Paul, joined in prayer with him. The martyr's agony was terrible, but not protracted; his soul soon took flight to his Lord and Master, whom on earth he had loved with so true and humble an affection. His body remained on the cross until the conclusion of the games; it was then sold to the Christians, who buried it secretly by night near the circus. In the early ages of the Church, a large terebinth-tree in the vineyards of the Vatican hill, discernible from a great distance, marked the spot where the first Pope was interred.

Almost before the last spectator had left the circus, the jailer made his appearance in the prison, bringing the joyful announcement to Paul that his turn would

come next. While his myrmidons were occupied in unfastening the rusty chains from the iron rings in the wall, a task of some difficulty, the Apostle had time to address a few words of consolation and admonition to his disciple. Nor did he forget his other friends, mentioning several by name, to whom Lucius was to give his last greeting. Lucius, he said, was to write to the various communities which he had founded, telling them he offered his life for them, that they might stand fast in the faith, in hope and in charity. At that moment he could truly say: "I have fought a great fight, I have fulfilled my course, I have kept the faith; there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day, and not only to me, but to them also that love his appearing."<sup>1</sup>) He will give it to you also, Lucius, my friend, if you are found faithful; for you yet have a season of severe trial before you. But with courage and humility you are certain of victory. "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."

The chains fell to the ground. Paul embraced Lucius and gave him his blessing, while he, with tears in his eyes, kissed the Apostle's wounded hands. The prison warders led him away, and Lucius remained alone in the dungeon where the Saint had lived for many months, and which was hallowed as the scene of his prayers and sufferings. The young man was now to experience that chief misery of prison life, solitary confinement, which to human nature is so repugnant.

In the evening hours of the 29th of June, the bolts were again withdrawn and the Cyclops entered.

"If you have come to summon me to death, you are right welcome," the Tribune said.

"Have patience, my good fellow," answered the man, who was evidently well pleased about something. "Your turn will come, in due time, and I wonder whether I shall get as good a price for your remains as I did for these two today. You Christians must practise the black art, and make spells out of the bones and

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<sup>1</sup>) 2 Tim. 4, 7.



blood of those who are executed. I pocketed a pretty price for every drop of your Pontifex's blood, and even for the nails that fastened him to the cross."

"How did my beloved fellow-prisoner meet his fate?"

"All went off quickly and without a hitch. The Praetor made short work of it, as he was invited to the Imperial table. He told Paul he must either sacrifice to Jupiter or die. Paul wanted to deliver a speech in defence of his faith, but the Praetor had no time to listen to it. The sentence was soon passed: "Take him away and behead him outside the Ostian Gate." So he was led away, and for old acquaintance's sake I went too, for I always feel an interest in the birds that were in my cage, and I like it when they die game. Paul displayed just as much courage as Peter did. But he must have been half foolish as well a clever sorcerer; for he embraced the headsman so tenderly that the man was almost bewildered. And when he had cut off his head with one stroke of his sword, milk instead of blood spouted out on his cloak."

"Did you see that yourself?"

"No, I cannot affirm that it was so, only it looked like it. But if it was the work of magic, it did the man no good, for he was as dead as a doornail. But what I came for was to ask you whether you really could not pay me any longer for the cell with the loophole? I told you it went against my conscience to let you have it for nothing."

Lucius replied that his purse was quite empty, and he knew no one whom he could ask to pay the required rent for him.

"Well, then, I wish you may amuse yourself here in the dark, where you certainly will not find the sunshine dazzle your eyes," the Cyclops rejoined, as he locked both doors and went his way.

Thus Lucius was left alone in the pitch-dark cell. For the first few days he did not mind it so much. The remembrance of the death of the two Apostles, and especially Paul's image was so continually, so vividly present to his mind, that the prison seemed a place to

be loved and honored. But by degrees, as this impression grew weaker, the perpetual darkness and the narrow limits of the dungeon became almost intolerable. He was yet young, and with all the force of his nature he craved for light and air. Was he really forgotten, forsaken by the whole world? The Christians in Rome knew nothing about him; as for Paulinus, he probably had left the town after his uncle's death or perhaps he had himself been arrested or even put to death.

And his mother, what had become of her? She said she should return to Rome as soon as she had found a safe place for Lucilla. If she had come back, either she had been unable to learn anything as to his whereabouts, or she had herself received the crown of martyrdom, and was in heaven. As for Berenice, he seldom thought of her now. The dream of greatness which the sybil of Caesarea had conjured up to inflame his ambition, was long ago dispelled. Then there was Thamar—to her his mind often recurred, and when he prayed for his mother and sister, he prayed for her as well. Doubtless she had long since become a Christian. Was she still in Jerusalem, or was she living in Antioch with her father and brother? And the old Rabbi, was he as stiffnecked and opinionated a Jew as ever? If so, she must have many a struggle to sustain in defence of her creed. Ofttimes she appeared to him in his dreams, sometimes he fancied she opened the prison doors for him as she did on that memorable night in Caiaphas' house. And when he woke, and found himself alone in the awful darkness, he had to summon to his aid all his faith in the presence of God, and in His fatherly Providence which he had imbibed from the Apostle's teaching, in order not to sink altogether in the waters of affliction.

"God is present with me here in this dungeon," he said to himself hundreds of times. Paul used to say: "In Him we live, and move, and are; He sees me, and He knows what is best for me. What matter if I die here, forgotten, abandoned by all my earthly friends, if He does not forget, does not abandon me?" These words he repeated to himself whenever doubt and

despair invaded his soul, and often he had hard work to drive them away; for his faith was only that of a neophyte, and his heart still yearned strongly for freedom and for the happiness that earth offers.

And oh, how slowly the time went by. He could scarcely distinguish day from night, for the unappetizing fare provided for him was not brought regularly by the careless warder. But though he could keep no reckoning of time, he knew many weeks and months had elapsed and the summer was over, for the cold air that found its way into the prison, the howling wind audible without, could only come from the wintry wings of Boreas.

Still days, weeks, months dragged on with leaden feet. Once when he asked the surly servitor who brought in his pitcher of water whether it was summertime in the outside world, the man replied that it was near the end of April. Thus it was a year since he was put into prison. Only one year! He remembered sitting with Lucilla under the lilacs in full bloom; he fancied he smelt the delicious scent of the blossoms, and heard the sweet voiced nightingale in the laurel-grove. Was he never again to inhale the perfume of flowers, to listen to the song of birds, to feel the balmy breath of the spring? Hot tears ran down the captive's cheeks. He recalled one day when, as a boy, he disputed with his sister about a wild rose, and to annoy her, pulled the fragile flower to pieces. What would he not give now for one way-side rose, for one glance from those dear eyes, that had filled with tears at his boyish naughtiness.

Still the days, the weeks passed by. Lucius thought it must be midsummer, but he had resigned himself to his fate, and ceased to make any count of time. He told himself it must go on thus till the foul air of the dungeon destroyed all the vitality of his youthful frame.

At length one day Lucius observed a striking change in the behavior of the slave who carried his scanty food to him. Generally the man would scarcely answer a word to the questions addressed to him, and went away directly he had pushed the bowl of soup, the loaf and

pitcher in through the half-opened door; but this time he threw the door wide open, and lingered, as if to say: "Is there nothing you want to ask of me today?"

Lucius availed himself of the opportunity to inquire whether the winter would not soon be coming. The slave laughed, and said: "Winter indeed! Why we have not yet reached the Ides of June! You should rather ask whether another emperor will not soon be coming, for the divine Nero committed suicide last night!"

"Nero dead!" Lucius exclaimed. "And he died by his own hand, you tell me. How did that come about?"

"It came about this way," the man answered, spitting on the floor. "The fact was, he had gone on a little too fast, and the people would not put up with his doings any longer. Both Julius the conqueror of Gaul, and Galba in Spain, with all their legions, threw off his authority, and that annoyed him beyond measure. He wanted to go out to them himself with the Praetorian Guard, and win them back to their allegiance with lyre and song. But the Praetorians did not care a rush for his piping and strumming, and they too called on Galba to assume the purple. Then the Senate plucked up courage, and declared Nero to be an enemy of the country. Moreover they ordered him to be stripped to the skin, and whipped through the streets of the city, the *furca* on his shoulders.<sup>1)</sup> By Bacchus, I would really have submitted to be whipped myself, for the sake of seeing the fun. But in the night the divine songster gave them the slip; he crept away to the country house of one Phaon, a liberated slave, lamented bitterly the loss to the world of so gifted an artist as himself, and finally drew his sword and cut his own gullet. You bet, the immortals will be delighted to have such a worthy addition to their number!"

At that juncture the jailer came hurrying along the corridor, calling out: "What are you after, you good-

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<sup>1)</sup> The *furca* was an instrument of punishment in the form of a fork which was placed on the culprit's neck while his hands were fastened to the two ends.

for-nothing rascal? You think, now that Galba is emperor, though he is yet far away in Spain, that you are your own master? The lash shall teach you your mistake! Now you, Tribune Lucius, have every reason to rejoice in the change of rulers, for I have always remarked that those who were mortal enemies of a Caesar, after his fall rise to high dignities. I daresay it will be so in your case, and my best wishes are with you. When Fortune smiles on you, do not forget the Cyclops, who has ever shown himself to be a conscientious and honorable man. You might really nominate me to the administration of some province just as well as one of the other Quirites. As it was only by order of Tigellinus that you were confined here, and he has fallen together with his imperial patron, you are at liberty to leave your present quarters whenever you please. I will even procure some more presentable clothes for you, as your own are all the worse for wear, and give you a few sesterii to boot, with the certain assurance that you will return them with fair interest as soon as your circumstances allow of your doing so."

All this came upon Lucius so suddenly, so unexpectedly, that he hardly knew whether it was not a dream. Nero dead, himself a free man! For some time he could hardly realize the fact. Then he gladly accepted the jailer's offer, for his garments would scarcely hold together. While a linen tunic and a cloak such as were usually worn by the townspeople in lieu of the more stately toga, were being fetched for him, he knelt down and kissed the floor of the cell wherein so many celestial blessings, so much earthly misery had been his portion.

During his long imprisonment he had almost lost the power of walking, and his eyes had grown unaccustomed to bear the light of day. The sunshine made them smart, and he shielded them with one hand, whilst with the other, grasping a staff the jailer had given him, he groped his way like a blind man. Whither, he asked himself, should he turn his steps? Doubtless the house where he lived with his parents was shut up and deserted. Presently he thought of Aquila, the friend whose hospitality Paul had often mentioned to him, and

he determined to repair to his residence on the Aventine hill.

In his weak state Lucius would have experienced great difficulty in reaching his destination, had he not been accosted by a lad, who asked him kindly if he had lost his sight, and would like him to act as his guide.

"I am not blind, my dear boy, only the sunlight dazzles me. I have spent many long months in a dark dungeon. If you would conduct me to the house of one Aquila, a tent-maker, on the Aventine hill, it would be a work of charity.

"To Aquila's house?" the boy rejoined; adding, in a lower tone: "Then you surely are one of the brethren, and you were imprisoned for the faith? If so, you must come first to my mother, she sells fruit close to the *pons triumphalis*."

Lucius acquiesced in this proposal, and the boy, whose name was Carus, took him to the little shop his mother kept. The good matron made him come into the inner room, and set before him freshly-baked bread and a cup of excellent wine. When she heard that the guest she was entertaining had been Paul's fellow-prisoner, out of veneration she kissed his feet, and did not know how to make enough of the Confessor of Christ. In fact Lucius had difficulty in restraining her demonstrations of reverence. From her he learnt that Paulinus left Rome a week after his uncle's execution, consequently nearly a year ago, and sailed for the East. In Palestine matters were going on in a sad way, but he would hear all the news from Aquila. Concerning his mother and sister she could give him no definite information. At any rate they had not been brought back to Rome as captives, for in that case she would have known it, since at the times of divine service the names of all who were cast into prison for Christ's sake were read out, and they were commended to the prayers of the faithful. Carus then conducted the Tribune to the Aventine. The city was all in an uproar; the inhabitants were exulting over the death of the tyrant and demanding the execution of his favorites. In one street a band of Praetorians, all more or less intoxicated, were dragging the

mutilated body of the unfortunate Tigellinus along the ground, and singing songs in mockery of Nero and of their late Prefect; now and again shouting a loud, boisterous Hurrah for their new Caesar. Lucius and his youthful guide had to make a circuit, passing through a narrow alley, in order to avoid meeting the uproarious rabble. "There you see the end of a life of vice," Lucius said to the boy.

Aquila and his wife Priscilla received the Tribune with open arms. Aquila was a Jew whom Paul had converted, he was a wealthy tent-weaver, much respected in the city. His wife was a Roman by birth; both were fervent Christians, mention of them is frequently made in St. Paul's epistles. They were deeply touched by Lucius' account of the last weeks the Apostle of the Gentiles spent on earth; he had been with them a great deal at one time, and even worked in their workshop. Finally Lucius said he wanted, as soon as he was strong enough to go to the Sabine hills, to find out what had become of his mother and sister; after that he intended to rejoin his legion, as military duty required him to do.

"That will fall in admirably with my plans," Aquila answered. "About a month hence I have to send a large consignment of tent-cloth to Caesarea, where the twelfth legion is still stationed; I shall go myself and I shall be delighted if you will accompany me. Vespasian has already subdued all Galilee, the towns on the coast, the country east of the Jordan, and by this time probably Idumea as well. He is now preparing to march against the capital, which is cut off from all possibility of attaining assistance. Thus you will be enabled to go with the forces and witness the awful retribution from the hand of God which will overtake my unhappy brethren in their hardness of heart. I wonder how Simeon has fared and the community in Pella whom Paulinus joined last year. If it is not quite impossible, I shall do my utmost to send them some subsidies from Caesarea."

Accordingly a few days later Lucius, mounted on a mule with which this friendly host provided him, repaired to the Sabine hills. To his horror and grief he found the house in ashes, and the gardens laid waste.

Even the beautiful olive trees, which gave its name to the villa, were hewn down, and their prostrate trunks half hidden by a luxuriant growth of wild flowers. In answer to his inquiries a goat-herd, tending his flock in the immediate vicinity, informed him that about a year before a troop of horsemen had suddenly made their appearance, and searched the house and all the country round to find the ladies who owned the villa.

Lucius asked anxiously if they had been discovered.

"No, they were warned in time to make good their escape with their old manservant. And the leader of the band (whom from the description given Lucius recognized to be Tigellinus) was so furious at not finding them that he set fire to the house and had the trees cut down."

"And where have the ladies gone to? They were my mother and sister?"

The goat-herd could not answer this query, nor though he spent several hours in making investigations in the neighborhood, could Lucius obtain any definite information concerning the place of their abode. One clue seemed to point to Umbria, another to Naples. He followed up the latter, but without any result, and at length found he must delay no longer if he was to reach Puteoli, where he had appointed to meet Aquila, as his vessel was to sail from that point.

He only just arrived in time to go on board with his friend. Aquila endeavored to comfort him in his disappointment, saying: "The Angel who guided Tobias on his way, or some other celestial spirit will accompany and watch over your dear ones. You will meet them again as soon as it pleases our heavenly Father, without whose consent not a hair of our head falls to the ground."

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## CHAPTER 35.

### In Berenice's Palace once more.

The "Star of Jacob," the vessel *Aquila* had chartered for the voyage to Caesarea, reached her destination safely. Before landing, the tent-manufacturer pointed out to Lucius from the deck the house wherein St. Peter baptized the Centurion Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. "I always put up there," he said. "It is the inn to which all the Christians go, and we assemble there for divine worship. Will you go there with me?"

"I must first present myself to the Commander-in-chief. But you may be sure that I shall put in an appearance every Sunday, if I possibly can," Lucius replied.

Meanwhile the ship lay to alongside the stone jetty, which reaching far out into the bay, formed one side of the harbor. Jonas the ship-owner was standing there, by the shed he had erected for the storage of merchandise; Lucius recognized at a glance his red hair and tall angular form, and remembered having seen Benjamin in his company. So he saluted him in a friendly manner and inquired after the boy and his sister.

At first the Jew eyed the Roman officer somewhat suspiciously, then he seemed to remember him, and said: "The Tribune, I believe who brought the boy from Jerusalem. Sir, that lad of Sadoc's was just like a wild colt, untamed and unbroken, and it is a great shame that the learned Rabbi should have brought him up so badly. I wanted to do him good, and corrected him according to the word of God. But the young rascal took himself off, first to the house of that Jezabel Berenice, and afterwards God knows whither. The divine chastisements will fall on him for all the annoyance he brought upon me. Probably he has taken himself off to Jerusalem, to rejoin his sister, for from the day when the messenger sent by the Rabbi returned without her,

there was no doing anything with the child. His sins will be visited upon him!"

"Then the Rabbi's daughter is still in Jerusalem?" Lucius asked.

"As far as I know," was the abrupt answer.

"And her father, what has become of him?"

The ship-owner shrugged his shoulders and said: "I neither know nor care. I got no thanks for the trouble I took with his unruly son, he only ascribed his disobedience to undue severity on my part, though I only acted as the word of God directs. I saw him a short time ago in this town. Perhaps he too has taken himself off to Jerusalem before now. The Romans allow everyone to go up there, but not one may come back. Or he may have gone to his own home in Antioch, to look after business matters. There, now I have been more communicative to you than it is my habit to be to Romans. Tell me where does the ship come from, and what does her cargo consist of—corn for the troops?"

"No, she carries linen for the tents from Rome."

"Oh, from Aquila, the Nazarite?" the ship-owner rejoined, spitting as he spoke, to show his detestation of the Christians. "He ought to be ashamed of himself, supplying the enemies of his nation with tent-cloth. At any rate it tells us this much, that Vespasian does not think he will take the holy city before the winter."

"You forget that you are talking to a Roman! Your freedom of speech might cost you dear. I know Aquila to be a man of honor, and there is no reason why he should not supply his goods to the Romans in a just war. For the matter of that, I think I remember that your ships carried corn from Egypt for our legions."

"That is true, Roman, and I stand corrected. The zeal of the Lord, wherewith I am zealous against the Nazarites, carried me a little too far. Therefore do not think again of what I said, and let us part friends."

Thereupon the Jew folded his arms across his breast, made a low bow and withdrew.

Lucius put on his coat of mail, not the splendid one which was Berenice's gift, and of which Tigellinus had robbed him, but a new one, procured for him by Aquila.

It was much simpler, yet it set off well the handsome manly figure of the Tribune, and the soldiers whom he met on his way to the palace looked at him with admiration. "A model Roman warrior — Mars himself would not be a better one" said two officers as they turned to look after him.

Lucius had been told that he would find Vespasian in Berenice's palace, and thither he accordingly went, but with mixed feelings. Ought he to ask to see Berenice? He had discussed this with himself during the voyage; he would say he was a Christian and give her back her promise, since it was under false suppositions that she had pledged her troth to him.

But he was not destined to have that interview, and make that declaration, which he could not but own would be difficult and painful. As he crossed the threshold Eupolemos met him, and instantly recognized him. "What, already back from Rome?" he exclaimed, raising his eyebrows. "Well, it cannot be said that we have heard much of the grand results expected from your eloquence in regard to Gessius Florus' trial. He is said to be somewhere in the south of Italy peacefully enjoying the proceeds of his roguery. Besides, we have heard news of another nature which were not calculated to do my royal mistress much honor. Reports reached us that you had been arrested, and on grounds not too creditable to yourself. However I will not believe that. Yet the Queen would certainly prefer not to receive you."

"I have no intention of intruding myself upon her," Lucius rejoined, the blood rushing hotly to his brow at the tone adopted by this menial, formerly so subservient. "I intended to pay my respects to the General, and afterwards to apprise the Queen of my return. If she does not wish to receive me, that is her own doing, and I certainly have no wish to force myself upon her. But if you dare to tell me I was arrested for reasons 'not very creditable to myself' I am bound by my honor as a tribune to take you to task for your insinuations. Therefore have the goodness to explain yourself. Pray what were the reasons alleged?"

"Oh, you want to pick a quarrel with one of the Queen's officers in her own residence? Is there no one here who will protect me against the assaults of this bully? Here, Guard, help for the Queen's chamberlain," shouted the cowardly fellow, who was terrified at the expression the Tribune's countenance wore.

"No one wants to hurt a hair of your head, but you must answer to me for what you just said," Lucius rejoined.

Eupolemos however would not be pacified; he called to the Centurion of the Guard; "He is threatening me! Only look at his angry eyes! He wants to quarrel with me and has affronted the Queen in my person."

"Now, Comrade, I hope you will be more reasonable than this excited chatterer!"

"Hear how insulting he is, he calls the Queen's chamberlain a chatterer!" Eupolemos exclaimed. A group of slaves and soldiers had already collected in the vestibule.

"I am sorry the word escaped me, but still I must insist on your specifying the discreditable reasons that led to my arrest in Rome," the Tribune said resolutely.

"Well then, if you must know, it was because you belong to the contemptible and godless sect of the Christians, and on that account you were imprisoned with the lowest of the people — deny it if you can!"

Eupolemos, emboldened by the presence of the soldiers and slaves, flung this accusation — at that period a condemnation in itself — at the Tribune with nothing short of fury. Lucius turned pale. He might have repudiated it as untrue, for it was not for being a Christian, but for protecting his sister that he was thrown into prison. But he felt that the time was come for him to bear shame for the name of Christ, so he boldly answered: "Yes, I was imprisoned with a Christian, and I am myself a Christian."

"Hear what he says! What a shameful thing, and he a Roman tribune!" ejaculated the bystanders.

"At least he has the courage of his convictions," the officer said. "Yet for the moment I must treat you as a prisoner, and inform the Legate of this matter. Give up your sword and come with me."

Resigning himself to his fate, Lucius followed the Centurion. He had never heard it said that Vespasian was cruel, but he was a Roman and a devout worshipper of the gods. It would be quite enough for one of the idolatrous priests to discover some evil portent in the entrails of a sacrificial victim, or in the flight of a bird, and declare that the gods were angered by the presence of the Christian tribune, and Lucius' life would not be worth a moment's purchase. Titus, Vespasian's son, who was a friend of his in their youthful days, might perhaps intercede for him, but the utterance of an oracle would have more weight with the old General than his son's entreaties. So Lucius looked death in the face; he offered to God the sacrifice of his life and waited calmly for his fate to be decided.

Meanwhile Eupolemos had acquainted Berenice of Lucius Flavus' arrival and of the scene that had been enacted in the vestibule. The majordomo, still in a state of the greatest excitement, exclaimed: "He actually had the effrontery to call me a chatterer! But I paid him out for it; I forced him to acknowledge himself an adherent of that vilest of sects, and there is no fear that he will prove troublesome to your Majesty any more. The Officer of the Guard has already placed him under arrest."

"I owe you small thanks for what you have done," the royal lady replied, as she reclined idly on her cushions. "You know how I dislike scenes. And what will be the result? In the palace, in the town, in the camp, every one will be talking of this young officer, whom I formerly distinguished by my favor. Besides he is a very agreeable man, and the trifling misunderstanding might easily have been set right by a few civil speeches. Go and send Elpis to me. I shall have to receive Titus presently, I want her to dress my hair."

Elpis entered to perform the duties of her office. The daintily-curled hair was re-arranged on her mistress' forehead, a few drops of costly oil, perfumed with violets, of eastern manufacture, were added to heighten the lustre of the glossy locks, and in the place of the

coronet which Berenice held in her slender fingers, a band of red silk encircled her dark tresses. She attentively studied the effect of this manner of arranging her hair in the silver mirror a slave held before her, and seemed satisfied with it. "Just a touch of *stibium* under the eyes," she said. "No, that is too much, how clumsy you are! — There, that will do. We will leave the rouge alone. Now hand me the rose-colored mantle with the onyx-clasp, that will look well with the sea-green robe. The folds seem to hang properly. Does it not show the right foot too much? Just a little above the ankle, so as to let the gold anklets be seen. Now stand at a little distance and look well at me; is all as it should be?"

"O my Queen, beware lest Juno or any other goddess should see you, she will be jealous of your beauty, and the envy of the immortals is to be dreaded," the slave answered, lifting her hands in admiration.

"O you flatterer! Now go and say I am ready to receive Titus the Legate."

A few moments later the expected visitor was ushered in.

Titus was a tall, handsome man, young and stoutly built. He was then about thirty years of age. His muscular frame and well expanded chest told of a good training in the wrestling-school; his head, covered with fair curls, was perhaps a little too large for perfect proportions. The square Roman chin, the firmly-shut mouth, and the wide forehead, from which the hair grew up straight, bespoke more than ordinary firmness, boldness and energy of character, while the expression of the large, dark eyes was proud and cold. At times however, they beamed with a softer, tenderer light, and so it was when they rested on the fair Princess reposing on her couch.

"By all the Graces," he exclaimed in a pleasant voice, "you become more beautiful every day, lovely Queen. I am tempted to believe that Aphrodite has lent you her girdle, or Circe has given you the elixir of perpetual youth!"

"Sit down here, brave Titus," she answered. "If I

really seem fairer today to your eyes, it is the reflection of the happiness that fills my heart ever since I have known that the immortal gods destine our lots to be united."

"In fact, after the wonderful things we saw and heard in Circe's cave, I can hardly doubt that so it is. And I thank the gods, for having appointed so charming a partner to share the throne in store for me."

"You speak somewhat coldly of the future — have you any doubt about it?"

"The gods themselves are overruled by Fate, and if I doubt at all, it is because of the possibility that we may be mistaken as to the meaning of the decree of Fate. By Jove, that would be the hardest trial of my life, to lose you as well as the crown of universal empire — I do not know how I could bear the disappointment."

"We are not mistaken," Berenice replied, while she contemplated the changing lights in the sparkling jewels of her diadem.

"Have you not already once been deceived?" Titus asked.

"There, some one has been telling tales to you? You mean the Tribune Lucius Flavius? It is that chatterbox Eupolemos!" cried Berenice vehemently, letting the coronet she held fall from her hands. "I will tell you all the story myself, I quite intended to do so, as soon as I heard of the tribune's return."

She then proceeded to unfold the narrative of the "absurd misapprehension," as she termed it, and concluded by saying: "You must acknowledge, my dear Titus, that the well set up figure of the tribune, the color of his hair, and the similarity of your name and his, Flavius and Flavius, must excuse my mistake. But now I have complete certitude respecting the decree, and you yourself saw that the words written in characters of fire formed the word Flavius. No, this time there is no possibility of error or deception."

"I hope you may be right, fairest Berenice," Titus answered, as he stooped to pick up the diadem which lay on the ground and handed it to her.

"*Accipio omen!* I take this coronet as a happy por-

tent of the imperial crown in the future," the royal lady said; but while she spoke so confidently there lurked a doubt in her ambitious soul, for she remembered only too well a similar scene being enacted between her and Lucius, and the fond hopes then raised had since proved a vain delusion.

Titus went on to say that Lucius Flavius was considered very like him, although the color of his eyes was different, and he was of slighter build. In fact in their school days he had even been taken for him. He was a good fellow, trustworthy and honorable. He would gladly have given him the command of the first cohort of the twelfth legion, for the man was not lacking courage and valor. Now he had rendered that impossible through his own folly, in joining that accursed Christian sect. He was always somewhat of a dreamer; he must have got that tendency from his mother, who was a Greek, for it is alien to the Roman character. As a boy he could not bear to see a slave whipped to death, and the true Roman is made of sterner stuff. "When my father hears of his apostacy from the religion of Rome," Titus concluded, "it may cost the foolish fellow his life."

Berenice shuddered, but not a word did she say in behalf of the man she formerly courted and flattered. She only sought herself in all that she did.

Titus then said his father had decided to send him to Rome to pay homage to the new Caesar who was expected to arrive in the capital in the autumn, on his return from Spain. Berenice immediately said that she would persuade her brother Agrippa to accompany him. Thereupon she employed all her eloquence and all her arts, urging the Legate to make use of this opportunity to pave for himself a way to the throne. "Galba is an old man, he will not reign long. Flatter him, and induce him to make you or your father his partner on the throne, or at least to nominate you as his successor. Do not spare money; scatter it freely among the Senators and Praetorians; by a golden ladder one mounts most easily, most surely, to the seat of power. It is a pity that your father, so wise in other respects, is somewhat



close-fisted in regard to money-matters. In that he does not show himself at all a model, either for a ruler, or even for a prudent merchant, for in commerce a man will scatter his gold broadcast if he sees a fair prospect of regaining it with large interest. And is not the Roman empire an inexhaustible mine of wealth?"

Titus could not do otherwise than acknowledge the justice of these remarks and he admired the acumen of her judgment. He said to himself that she was a born ruler, and took his leave, fully determined not to let slip any possible opportunity of prompt and decisive action.

Berenice kissed her hand to him and looked after him with a beaming countenance and winning smile, until the curtain fell behind him.

Then her manner underwent a complete change. She frowned angrily and clapped her hands; and when the slave appeared in answer to her summons, she bade her send Eupolemos to her in a tone that fairly frightened the girl.

When the major-domo, a few minutes later, came out of his mistress' boudoir, his mouth wore a forced smile, by which however Elpis was not deceived. She had listened at the door, and had thoroughly enjoyed hearing the epithets that Berenice flung at the chief of her household. An "old babbler" was the mildest term applied to him; in her anger she had threatened to have him removed to one of the loneliest fortresses, Machaerus, if ever again he presumed to give a hint of her private affairs to anyone, and particularly to the Legate Titus.

Elpis knew very well what that meant, and remembered the exceptional favor which her mistress formerly showed to the tribune. "Now she is in love with the Legate, whom she thinks she has in leading strings. Yet Lucius was a handsomer man than this Titus, and I should fancy a finer character," Elpis said to herself. "I must tell Drusilla's maid that the Tribune has returned, and that Eupolemos had him apprehended for being a Christian. They keep themselves so secluded in their wing of the palace, that no news ever reaches them."

Lucius meanwhile had been conducted into a hall on the ground floor, where he was kept for the time-being.

The room was dimly lighted, thus he failed at first to recognize a Jew who was there, a tall slim figure with a long, narrow face and a thick black beard. Lucius felt sure he had seen the man before, but he could not remember where or when, until he addressed a few polished sentences to him in Greek. He then knew him to be the scribe who had brought the charges against Gessius Florus in the presence of the Syrian Legate, and stepping up to him, held out his hand with a courteous salutation. As he did so he became aware from the rattling of a chain, that the Jew's wrists were fettered.

"Joseph Ben Matthias, if I am not mistaken? and in fetters. I am sorry to see you in such circumstances," he said to him.

"Your kind words do me honor. I remember you too, you are the brave Centurion who defended Queen Berenice from the insults of that vulgar Asiatic, and I think I know your name, Luminosus or Lucidus, Oh yes Lucius, I remember that it was a name of good augury. I have changed my name to Flavius Josephus, out of respect for my generous patron and protector the most noble Flavius Vespasianus, who spared my life. These fetters you now see me wearing, are mere child's toys. I do not believe they weigh more than a couple of pounds. I wish they did, for before long Vespasian will replace them by gold bracelets."

Josephus then related how, after the fall of Jotapata, he had saved his life by boldly prophesying that Vespasian would become the ruler of the whole earth.<sup>1)</sup> Since then the General took him about with him everywhere under surveillance, promising to reward him with royal liberality, if the prediction came true.

"And if it does not, you will have to pay for it with your head. Whatever induced you to make such a rash prophecy?" the Tribune said.

"You are surely aware of the universal expectation of the advent of a great king, who will arise in Judea, and rule the whole world? And the prophecies in the book of Daniel point clearly to the present day."

"Do you, who are a Jew, venture to apply that pre-

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<sup>1)</sup> Josephus. Wars of the Jews, III, 8, 9.

diction of a future Messiah to a Roman? Do you, who are a scribe, not know that the Messiah must be a son of David's royal lineage, that He was to be born in Bethlehem of a pure Virgin? How can that be said of Vespasian or his son Titus?"

"I am perfectly well acquainted with the passages to which you allude. But if I were to accept them as prophetic, I should be obliged to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, already come into the world, and that I will by no means admit. He did not bring universal dominion, which was the chief object in view."

"I believe in Him as being the Son of God, the rightful king of Heaven and earth," Lucius quietly answered.

"What, you are a Christian!" the Jew exclaimed, drawing back a little space. "It is a singular thing that this creed gains ground everywhere, even among the sober-minded Romans. I should almost be inclined to take up with it myself, if it were not so impolitic and of so impractical a nature. For I must confess, there was something indescribably sublime, divine, about that Jesus.<sup>1</sup>) And what is said concerning his resurrection is not simply a fabrication, the Chief Council were very much embarrassed about it at the time, and several of our most learned doctors of the law, such as Gamaliel, joined the band of his adherents. The large majority, however, were poor and illiterate. And now that a generation has passed, have they attained dominion over the world? Many of them have been put to death; very few of Jesus' disciples are still living. Do that handful of men think they will exercise universal sway in opposition to the dominant beliefs? There is no possibility of their doing so. Look at the iron might of these steel-clad legions, see what a firm hold the cultus of the gods has over the people. The idea is so contrary to common sense that I cannot conceive how a sensible Roman could be induced to adopt such a creed. Pardon me for speaking so frankly to you."

In vain Lucius endeavored to convey to the mind

<sup>1</sup>) Josephus. Antiquities XVIII. 3, 3. See the note at the end of this chapter.

of the apostate Jew an idea of the spiritual power, of the spiritual dominion, which the divine Founder of the Christian religion rendered it possible of exercising. His words only provoked vehement contradiction, and he observed to his sorrow, that his interlocutor had made shipwreck of all beliefs. "If Jehovah exists," the unhappy man said, "He ought not thus to give His people over into the hand of their enemies."

"He has done so to chastise them for their perfidy and for putting the Messiah to death. Did not Jesus weep over Jerusalem, because when He would have protected it as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, it would not accept His gracious invitation, but cried: 'His blood be on us, and on our children.'"

When Lucius found that the apostate was not to be convinced, he desisted from further argument, and turned the conversation to the war and the more recent events that had occurred in Palestine since his flight from Jerusalem. Then Flavius Josephus gave him a detailed account of the strife of factions in Jerusalem and of the war in Galilee.

As soon as the party for peace was suppressed in the city, quarrels began to divide the party of the Zealots. Eleazar was not chosen as its leader, although he had got the treasures of the temple and a considerable portion of the spoil taken from Gallus into his hands. A council formed for the defence of the city—the members of which were at war with one another—wielded the highest authority; sentence of death was passed on one individual after another, and these sentences were executed at night by the *Sicarii*. Whoever was considered in the slightest degree to be "suspect," was not sure of his life for a single moment.

Whilst this state of things prevailed in the city, Josephus had been so fortunate as to be appointed to the command in Galilee, and there he had strained every nerve to raise an army of 100,000 men and to train and discipline them after the Roman model. Lucius could scarcely suppress a smile at the way in which the man talked, as if he were the greatest strategist in the world. He had soon discovered that in John of Gischala, a cowardly boaster, he had an opponent who would with-

stand and calumniate him, and who actually did lay charges against him before the Council of War in Jerusalem. Josephus was ordered to appear before the Council to justify himself, but he had the wisdom not to obey the summons, and well for him that he did not, as his death was a foregone conclusion.

Unfortunately in consequence of these intrigues his army was divided and broken up, so that when Vespasian and Titus massed their forces at Ptolomäis, he could not venture to attack them in the open field. John of Gischala betook himself to Jerusalem with his followers, and thus added another to the discordant elements already raging in the city.

Josephus went on to say that with 40,000 men he forthwith hastened to occupy the fortress of Jotapata, the most important stronghold in Galilee, and held it with great gallantry for forty-seven days against the whole of the Roman army, 70,000 strong. He intended to write the history of the siege; it would be the means of handing down his name with renown to the latest posterity. This the man, who was inordinately vain, actually did, giving a really graphic account of the attack and the defence. Finally through the treachery of an individual the town fell into the hands of the Romans, but even then they had to fight their way in from house to house, from street to street.

Lucius was listening with breathless eagerness to the narrative of this fluent speaker when a centurion entered, saying he had come to conduct the tribune Lucius Flavius immediately to the presence of the Commander in Chief.

Note to page 413, Chapter 35.

The well-known passage from Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 3, 3) runs as follows: "Now there was about this time a man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with gladness. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the prophets had foretold. This and a thousand other wonderful things were predicted of him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

## CHAPTER 36.

### Military Degradation.

In the same hall where Gallus the Legate had received the deputation of the Jews, the officers of Vespasian's army were assembled round their General. Vespasian, though now an elderly man, was still robust and vigorous. His head, well set on unusually broad shoulders, bespoke the same energy and determination that were discernible at a glance in his son Titus, only these qualities were much more strongly marked in the father. The expression of his features was cold and calculating; the latent fire that flashed occasionally from Titus' eyes, seldom lit up his. He was bald with the exception of a few gray locks on his temples; his deeply-furrowed face was like that of all patricians of that time, closely-shaven.

Wearing a handsome suit of armor over which the purple mantle of the General was thrown, he stood at a table on which he had placed his gilded helmet and a few documents, receiving his subordinates as they entered with a slight and stiff bow. To king Agrippa, who had brought him auxiliary troops to the number of thirty thousand men, he alone showed more attention, bowing low, and inviting him to take a seat on his right hand. He motioned to Titus to take the place on his left, while the other two legates, Placidus and Cerealis, were seated opposite.

Vespasian began reading aloud a letter from the Senate which had been brought by a ship from Italy, then he communicated to his officers the information concerning the state of affairs in Rome that he had learnt from private letters. "Galba is recognized by the Senate," he concluded. "The legions in Belgium and on the Rhine seem to be of the same mind as those of Spain, Gaul, and Italy. It is high time that our legions paid homage to the new Emperor. I propose therefore that we have a special sacrifice offered, and sports for

the soldiers. A deputation must besides be sent to Rome from the East to salute Galba on his entry into the city. Titus, you had better prepare for the journey. What is your opinion, most excellent king Agrippa?"

"My opinion never differs from yours," was the answer of the courteous and smooth-tongued Herodian. "May I ask to be allowed to defray the expenses of the festivities? Thanks. And if it is agreeable to you and your victorious son, I should like to be one of the party going to Rome, provided that is, that my presence here can be dispensed with."

"We will see how we can get on without you, valiant Sire," Vespasian rejoined with a somewhat scornful smile. "At all events you will be back in time to take part in storming Jerusalem. As long as the enemy are at war among themselves, and are consuming their provisions, it would be folly to attack them and thus re-unite them. You will explain that to Galba," he concluded, addressing Titus, "if he wonders at our remaining so long inactive. We are gradually narrowing the circle around the city, driving back the fugitives, leaving the inhabitants to tear one another to pieces and finally die of hunger; ultimately we shall put an end to the tragic drama with fire and sword, without unnecessarily sacrificing the lives of many gallant Romans. For this nation of the Jews together with their chief city must be swept from the face of the earth; it will never submit to the supremacy of Rome. Their God is the foe of our gods, and he is hateful to our gods."

Agrippa would gladly have pointed out the difference between the fanatical party of the Jews, and those who were friendly to Rome, but he only ventured to do so in a half-hearted way, and Vespasian cut him short by saying if the friends of Rome would sacrifice to the gods of Rome as Agrippa did, they should count as Romans and not only be spared, but held in honor. "But in the Roman empire we cannot tolerate a state within a state, with its own divinities and its own laws. And that brings me to the subject I wished to discuss with you."

Vespasian then said that the tribune Lucius Flavus had returned from Rome a Christian, and openly declared himself to be one. He added that the tribune

had distinguished himself by his courage in defending the castle in Jerusalem, that he was the descendant of a noble patrician family, that the Princess Drusilla had sent a petition in writing in his behalf, and finally, a fact which should not be overlooked, he would be of great service in the siege on account of his acquaintance with the locality.

At the conclusion of this speech, Vespasian ordered Lucius Flavus to be brought in. The young officer entered the presence of his judges with a modest yet dignified bearing. He calmly confessed his belief, and declared himself ready to die for the faith.

Vespasian looked with complacency at the tribune as he stood there, a typical Roman soldier, and in his heart he could not do otherwise than admire the courage with which he acknowledged his convictions. Yet in stern and harsh language he upbraided him, asking how he, a Roman, could abjure the worship of the immortal gods, who had exalted his nation above all other nations on the face of the earth. How could he, a Tribune, set such an example to the soldiery who fought under the eagles of Jupiter and offered sacrifice to them before engaging in battle, such an example of insubordination to the highest authority? He commanded him in the name of the Emperor instantly to sacrifice to Jupiter, the greatest and most glorious of the gods.

To this behest, which coming from his General, had for him the force of a military command, Lucius opposed our Lord's words: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The Christians, he said, would be the bravest soldiers and the most loyal subjects of the Emperor, only they could not obey when he commanded them to do what God had prohibited. Nor was he to be moved by threats, and presently Vespasian had him conducted away.

The veteran warrior then asked Agrippa what he thought on the matter. "My dictions will not swerve a hair's breadth from yours," the king replied. "But if you wish to know my humble opinion, I should sentence him to death. More and more join this abominable Nazarite sect, which I detest from my heart both as a



Roman subject and a Jew by birth. Make an example of that Tribune. He might be sent into the amphitheatre to fight the lions when we have the sports in Galba's honor. At any rate I beg you will not pay the slightest heed to my sister Drusilla's entreaties. She is kind-hearted, and utterly destitute of judgment."

"What do you say, Titus?" Vespasian next asked, without altering the set expression of his countenance.

Titus said Nero was the first of all the Roman Emperors who had put the Christians to death for the sake of their creed, and he did not envy him the reputation he thereby gained. Why trouble ourselves about a man's philosophical or religious opinions if he paid the taxes and did his duty as a good citizen? He was for expelling the Tribune from the army, and letting him go his way.

Cerealis thought otherwise. He said doubtless there were other Christians in the army. He would have all who refused to scatter incense to Jupiter on the occasion of the approaching sacrifices to be disarmed and ranged in ranks before the assembled legions, and cut down to the last man, unless they would consent to offer sacrifice. He feared the just anger of the gods as long as these Christians remained, a plague-spot in the army.

Placidus gave his opinion last of all. He considered it an excellent idea to separate the Christians from their comrades at the time of the great sacrifice, but he thought it too barbarous to kill them in cold blood. Why weaken their forces by the loss of so many brave soldiers? He was acquainted with several Christians who could not be outdone in valor and fidelity. He therefore proposed to form a *centuria* of Christians, a penal company, who on the march, in the camp, on guard, should always have the most arduous and onerous part of the service, and should have the post of greatest danger assigned them when an onslaught was made on the enemy.

"Do you not think such a company would go over to the enemy?" Vespasian inquired.

"Men who would rather lay down their lives than be disloyal to their faith are not traitors," Placidus rejoined.

"The suggestion is not a bad one. I will think it over. If necessary they could at any time be decimated, as Cerealis proposed. They shall dig the trenches, serve as sentries, be in the van of a storming party, and at the first indiction of treachery those behind could cut them down. They shall be officered by our sternest and strictest disciplinarians. And this fellow Lucius Flavus shall be degraded to the ranks and serve as a private soldier. That is my decision."

Thereupon Vespasian dismissed his officers with a slight bow, only bidding Titus remain.

"I wonder you should so incline to leniency, such extreme leniency," he said in a severe manner. "Perhaps you remembered that the Tribune was an old schoolfellow of yours. That was unworthy of a Roman. Think of Lucius Junius Brutus! I lay upon you this penalty: that you inform Lucius Flavus of his sentence, and yourself see that it is executed."

Titus accordingly went to communicate the unwelcome intelligence to his former friend. He noticed that Lucius turned white to the lips. The shame of losing his rank in the army, of being disgraced before the world was far more bitter to him than a sentence of death.

Titus perceived this, and said: "Comply with the General's orders and sacrifice to the gods, and I will confirm you in your rank of tribune."

"You would yourself despise me if I acted contrary to my convictions," Lucius replied.

"Then choose death rather than dishonor and die the death of a true Roman. Here is my sword."

Lucius took the sword in a firm grip, and pointed it to his heart. Then he stopped short, and handed it back to Titus, saying: "You will see on the battlefield that I do not fear death. But I dare not put an end to my own life, that is forbidden by God who alone has the right to give life and take it away."

"Then you are a coward, and your God makes cowardice a law," Titus answered, turning his back upon the friend of his youth with undisguised contempt.

Now hard times began for Lucius, a life of constant hardship and humiliation. About a hundred soldiers refused to offer incense at the festal sacrifice; these were

some of the best and most reliable men in the army, as the centurions sullenly admitted. A few were ashamed of the name of Christ and consented to scatter incense on the altar. Vespasian inspected those who had been loyal to their faith and heaped reproaches upon them. The command over them he gave to Bilosus Vafer, the most dreaded Centurion in the whole army, with orders not to spare the Christians by day or by night, in the camp or on the field. Then the little band of Christians marched out of the town to the neighboring camp, amid the sneers and biting raillery of their comrades, headed by Bilosus Vafer, who could not contain his annoyance at being placed over this company of culprits. "You dogs," he said, "I will make you pay bitterly for this! You shall not be treated like Roman soldiers, but as common slaves. Now set to work, while your comrades make merry at the feast! Clean out the stables and clear out the litter. Tonight you shall be on guard. And if I catch any one of you shirking his work, or if I hear a word of complaint, that man shall feel the touch of the lictor's rods on his shoulders. I will teach you to abjure the worship of Jupiter and take up with the crucified Galilean!"

While Lucius, late that same evening, was for the first time in his life performing the work usually assigned to the lowest camp followers, he heard some one call him by name, and looked round. "Ah Martius," he exclaimed, as he saw the decurion standing there. "You have come to admonish me as to my duty, I can read in your face all you would say. Spare yourself the trouble, faithful old friend; you do not understand nor can you understand me."

"No indeed, by Bacchus! Who could understand how the son of a Roman senator and a tribune of our famous twelfth legion can allow himself to be treated like a dog!" the gray-haired veteran replied, drawing his hand across his eyes with a rough oath. "I will tell you what it is, Lucius. You are bewitched, as sure as I am a loyal soldier. I went to the haruspex Quartus Querulus, of whom Vespasian has a great opinion, and paid him a good round sum for a counter-charm." Martius thereupon drew from his pocket a tiny phial,

which he gave to Lucius. "The haruspex assured me it would counteract the spell if you took three drops every day and turned round three times; to the right when the moon is waxing, and to the left when she is waning. Then you must have faith in its efficacy."

"Unfortunately I have not faith in it, my good Martius. But I thank you from the bottom of my heart, as much as if your philtre had been the means of restoring me to Vespasian's favor and good graces. I feel your kindness deeply, dear old friend!"

The decurion shrugged his shoulders. "Well, there is no helping those who will not take advice. I will ask Quartus Querulus whether he knows of any spell that acts without faith on the part of its object. It would be too atrocious if so fine and brave an officer were to end by being a stableman and army-drudge."

Such was, however, the lot of Lucius and his fellow-Christians for many a weary week. They accompanied Cerealis to Idumea and Hebron, and on the march had to carry a double quantity of beams for the intrenchments, and when they reached the camp exhausted with fatigue, they were told off to fetch water and carry fuel; while on every occasion they were oppressed and harried, as only soldiers can be harried and oppressed by inhuman officers. More than once Lucius' heart almost failed him in the bitterness of his soul; but in the still hours of the night he bethought him of the image of the thorn-crowned Redeemer, and his sorrows no longer seemed intolerable, so that he was able to encourage some of his wavering brethren to persevere.

Meanwhile great political events were taking place. The new Emperor was too parsimonious to please the Praetorians; after Galba had been but a few months on the throne, in the commencement of the year 69 A. D. they deposed him together with his adopted son, and for the sum of a million sesterii (some £8330) raised Salvius Otho to the purple. The tidings reached Titus and Agrippa in Greece, on their way to Rome. Instead of pursuing their journey and swearing allegiance to Otho, they hastened back to Caesarea, where Vespasian still was. Soon the news came that the legions on the Rhine had proclaimed Aulus Vitellius emperor and

were marching with him to Italy, where a civil war between the rival Caesars would ensue.

Here was Berenice's opportunity. She left Titus no peace. "Now or never," she said to him, "you can win the imperial crown for your father, for yourself, for us both! Have only the legions of Italy, of Germany, of Spain got a voice? The Egyptian and Syrian legions can also make themselves heard, I will induce them to speak. There are nine legions in the East. Somaes, the ruler of the Lebanon, and Antiochus the king of Comagena, can each furnish ten thousand mounted auxiliaries, the kings of Pontus and Armenia money and supplies, and the king of the Parthians a contingent of forty thousand horsemen. I am allied with all those monarchs. And with such forces at your disposal can you not easily vanquish a creature like Vitellius, the lowest debauchee and gourmand on the face of the earth? If not, you are not the man I take you for."

Titus did not need the spur. But his father, taking all things into account, hesitated and finally declined to act. He did not covet the imperial dignity, for he had even now seen more than one proud occupant of the throne meet with a sudden and headlong fall. He was content with the renown he had acquired in Britain, that of an able and victorious general, and the possession of a large fortune which he hoped to double by the conquest of Jerusalem. Even when the report reached Caesarea of Otho's defeat at Bedriacum and his subsequent suicide, Vespasian was not to be persuaded to take a decisive step. On the contrary, he caused his legions to swear fidelity to Vitellius, as they had shortly before done to Galba and Otho. But they took the oath under protest.

At this juncture Berenice succeeded through Titus in gaining Mucianus, the Governor of Syria, to her side, and he, a man influential on account of his age, his wealth and the esteem in which he was held, at length persuaded Vespasian to take the risk, placing his four legions at his disposal. This turned the scale. Vespasian's soldiers received the proposal, which accorded with their own long cherished wishes, with acclamations of delight. By the middle of July 69 A. D. Vespasian

had been proclaimed Emperor by the legions in Egypt, his own forces in and around Caesarea, and the troops under the command of Mucianus in Antioch.

Then the new Caesar called for Josephus, who by a frivolous interpretation of the Messianic prophecies had foretold his elevation to the empire, and commanded that his fetters should be struck off, promising him his favor for the rest of his days.

Berenice reminded Titus of the vision which seemed to promise the crown to him and to her. "We will not be precipitate," he answered; "our thread of life will be as the fates have spun it. Of what use to pledge our troth? If the crown is ever mine, it shall be yours also." Berenice was obliged to content herself with this promise, though it was too coolly worded to please her ardent ambition.

Meanwhile Bacchanalian revelry went on in the camp. The soldiers sang and shouted the praises of Vespasian and his son Titus, boasting in their cups of what they would do and be in Rome when, after the sack of Jerusalem, they returned laden with spoils to the banks of the Tiber. Crowned with wineleaves, waving aloft the thyrsus, or bacchanalian staff, they wandered through Caesarea, making the streets and alleys reecho with their noisy mirth.

The Christians too, by Titus' expressed desire, had their share in the general rejoicing, and made merry among themselves. For they were only too glad that after such monsters as Caligula, Nero and Vitellius, a man of worth and honor like Vespasian or Titus should hold sway in Rome, and they hoped that under his rule greater toleration and liberty would be extended to the Christians. Besides they longed for the termination of the war; then, they hoped, they would be released from military service; and indeed the tasks imposed on them were daily becoming more unbearable.

However many months went by before decisive measures were taken. Not until Vitellius had come to an ignominious end, and Vespasian, who had waited for the winter storms to be over, had embarked on the voyage to Italy, did Titus in the spring of 70, begin to move with the army under his command in the direction of Jerusalem.

## BOOK IV.

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### The Fall of Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER 37.

### Nathaniel's Embassy.

Shortly before the commencement of the siege, John of Gischala with his Galilean troops had succeeded in gaining the upper hand in Jerusalem. The moderate party, alarmed at the apparently unlimited number of executions that took place by order of the Zealots, allied themselves with him, and Eleazar with his band of followers found himself confined within the precincts of the inner temple. The Galileans occupied the fortress Antonia and the long cloisters surrounding the temple, and skirmishes were of daily occurrence in the outer fore-courts.

Eleazar perceived that unaided he could not get the mastery over his opponents. After again surveying the position and strength of the Galileans he summoned the Chief Council for the defence to meet in the chamber called Gasith for deliberation.

He saw himself environed by gloomy countenances, and the dark eyes of the men glowed with sinister passions. "Brethren," he began, addressing them, "I have received certain intelligence that the Roman army, four or five legions strong, besides the contingent of mercenaries contributed by that traitor Agrippa, will appear before our walls in the early part of the spring. May the Lord rain down on them fire and brimstone as He did upon Sodom and Gomorrah! I long thought that the strife which the Lord our God stirred up in their own house—praised be His Name!—would have caused the return of the godless heathen to Italy, where the internecine war would have swallowed them up, like the Philistines in the days of Saul, when every man's sword was against his brother. Already matters have come to such a pass that battles take place in the streets of Rome, and the temple of their greatest gods in the Capitol is burnt down. And all the vile images, the work of



their hands, to which they paid idolatrous worship, have been destroyed by fire. Whereas the house of our God still stands and will stand in its majesty for ever."

The members of the Council enthusiastically applauded his speech, exclaiming: "He hath promised it to David and his seed for ever!"

"He cannot, He will not forsake us!"

"He will send His Angel and destroy our enemies like the host of Sennacherib!" Such were the confused cries that arose on all sides.

Eleazar continued: "We are all assured that He can defend His House and His holy city without human help, if He so wills. But as in the time of Antiochus He made use of Mathathias and his sons the Machabees as instruments to banish the abomination of idolatry from Jerusalem, so He has vouchsafed to choose us to break the yoke of the Gentiles that weighs on the shoulders of the Daughter of Sion; not that Galilean who fled from the face of the Romans like a cowardly cur, not those poltroons, who halt between two sides, and would lick the dust before the enemies of their people, to save their miserable lives and their beloved gold. Death to them all, as to Pharaoh and his army in Egypt."

Again Eleazar was interrupted by an outburst of applause. When it had subsided he resumed: "It is however absolutely necessary for us to gain the mastery over that coward Gischala. We shall have to march against the Romans and defeat them in the mountain passes as we did Cestius Gallus. How can we do that with a traitor in the citadel? He would immediately lay his sacrilegious hands on the sanctuary and its treasures. And how would it be possible for us to defend the city and the temple if we were liable at any moment to be attacked by that wily Galilean, or left in the lurch by his dastardly followers? No, we must get rid of him somehow, cost it what it may. I only know one expedient and it is one which I am reluctant to put forward."

All who were present called on him to tell it.

"Ben Gioras," was the reply.

"What the bandit chief, whom you yourself were at

such pains to chase out of the city," exclaimed Meir the son of Belga, with a scornful laugh.

"I acknowledge that I was wrong then. I was exasperated at hearing the silly populace salute him with alleluias as the son of David and the promised Messiah. I do not think that will occur again. He has a brave arm and can bring to our support ten or twenty thousand determined followers out of Idumea and the desert."

"You think you will drive out the devil by means of Beelzebub," said the senior member of the Council, Dalai. "How are we to get rid of Ben Gioras when we have made use of him?"

"He only cares for booty. We will promise him a considerable portion of the treasures of the temple," Eleazar replied.

"Suppose he takes the whole of it? Better he should have it than the Galileans or the Romans," Dalai rejoined.

"The greater portion could be concealed beforehand in the subterranean vaults and thus kept from his greedy hands. We will all swear to keep the secret," suggested Ben Caiaphas.

"Do you approve this plan, brethren?"

The votes were taken and the majority were in favor of the proposal.

But how, it was asked, was Ben Gioras to be communicated with? How was he to be got into the town? The Galilean and his followers kept all the gates.

"Leave that to me," Eleazar answered.

At the close of the meeting, Eleazar went in search of his brother Nathaniel, who by that time had grown to be a tall, slim lad about fifteen years of age. He had been taken by his brother into the temple, when the Zealots were driven out of the High town by John of Gischala. "Nathaniel, you know you owe me some compensation," the Captain of the Guard said to him, "for when that Roman Centurion disappeared out of our house with Sadoc's little son, I am certain it was not without your assistance or connivance however persistently you deny it. Now we can be quits again if you will render a great service to the city and the temple of God. Will you do it!"

Nathaniel's eyes gleamed as he replied: "You are well aware, brother, that I would risk my life most willingly for the city and the temple. I can use the sling as well as any one of my age. Only today from the roof of the temple I struck three Galileans who were shooting arrows at our people from the Antonia. I practise with the sword and lance daily, and I am quite big enough to wear a coat of mail, if only you would allow me to have one. But you have never looked civilly at me since that stupid affair about the Centurion, though I declare I never let him out. I wish you would believe me at last."

"You shall have a suit of armor, and a handsome one too, if you execute the commission properly that I am about to entrust to you," Eleazar answered. He then proceeded to expound his plan to him, and when he was satisfied that Nathaniel understood it thoroughly, he made him put on the ragged tunic of a mendicant, and wrap up his left foot in a dirty piece of linen. Then he gave him a crutch, saying: "Now if in the dusk you limp through the narrow streets, no one will recognize you as the Captain's brother." Once more he made him repeat the instructions given him, and questioned him on several points; then he bade him come along with him.

"Let me go and pray before the Holy of holies, before setting out on my perilous journey," Nathaniel entreated. "People say that the angels forsook the sanctuary, uttering loud lamentations, after it had been desecrated by the shedding of blood, at the time when the brazen gates were opened by unseen hands. But He whose name we dare not speak, will yet perhaps hear me."

"You are still a regular baby, and after all it is perhaps unwise on my part to send you on such an errand," Eleazar said crossly.

"Why so? Because I say my prayers? I know quite well that you say men should fight and women should pray. I wish you prayed more, brother, then the Lord would grant you victory!"

"Say your prayers then, for aught I care. Only be quick about them: There is no time to be lost."

While Nathaniel commended himself to God, Eleazar

attempted to repeat some long-disused words of prayer; but his soul darkened by his unbridled passions, stained by many a deed of blood, seemed incapable of doing otherwise than invoking a curse upon the enemies of God, and finally cursing himself for being doomed to live in such troublous times, for having sprung from so ill-starred a race. He said in his heart that he could almost believe what his unhappy grandfather was continually dinning into their ears, that the curse of the Nazarite rested upon them, upon the city, upon the whole nation. How much blood, he said to himself, has been shed in this city, nay in the very temple itself, since the day when my father and grandfather joined in the cry: His blood be on us and on our children. "And yet I would repeat those words over again this day, rather than acknowledge a Galilean to be the Messiah."

Nathaniel soon joined him, and from an apartment which Eleazar occupied close to the Council chamber, the two brothers descended into the vaults which extended to a considerable distance beneath the temple and the fore-courts. They lighted torches and proceeded down a narrow steep flight of steps and along several winding passages. Through the fissures in the rocky walls and through crevices in the masonry at the side one could hear water gurgling and rushing.

"This is the conduit Pilate constructed, one of the few Romans who did a little good besides a great deal of harm to the city. It was he who had the Nazarite crucified," Eleazar remarked. "Above there the overflow of water is carried down to the pool of Siloe. We must have the aqueduct guarded, lest any of the Galilean's people should effect an entrance that way. In some places the water is not more than knee-deep. The water used in the temple and the blood of the sacrificial victims is carried off by means of a drain into the valley of Cedron. This mass of rock is exactly under the Holy of holies. You know that it was on this rock that our father Abraham was about to offer his son Isaac."

"Yes, and on this rock the altar stood whereon the just Abel offered the first sacrifice, a lamb of his flock, which was more pleasing to the Most High than the ob-

lation of his brother Cain. At least that is the tradition though the spot is not indicated in Holy Scripture." So saying Nathaniel reverently touched the rock hallowed in his eyes on account of the signal manifestations of the Godhead.

"Here is a sign cut in the rock which will show you your way, if perchance you come back to the city alone. Look at this arrow with a single feather; it points out the way into the room on the ground floor through which we came. You will only have to knock at the door and the sentry will hear you. Do you remember the password?"

"Israel's vengeance."

"That is right. The arrows with the two feathers lead into other galleries, and you might easily lose your way in them. So only pay heed to this mark, as it shows the way into the old palace of the Asmoneans. Now go down those steep steps and through a long passage under the Tyropeon valley and you will come out where another flight of steps takes you into the vaulted cellars of the Asmonean palace. I placed a sentry there, though the way is almost unknown, he will let you pass if you give the watchword. Now farewell, and see that you soon bring us the assistance we need."

"Farewell, Eleazar. You shall have every reason to be satisfied with me." Thus the two brothers parted. Nathaniel cautiously descended the long flight of steps—he counted 256—then he walked quickly through the narrow passage excavated in the rock and mounted another flight, counting the steps aloud, for he felt a little nervous in those subterranean galleries.

The sentry heard his voice and was prepared to receive him with lance at rest, but he could not help laughing when he saw the lad dressed in rags with a crutch and bandaged foot emerge into the daylight with a lusty step.

"By Solomon's treasures," said the officer in command after the password was given, "you can walk as well as anyone in spite of your bad foot, and you can count better than I can! Whither are you going?"

"There now, I forgot that I had to walk lame till I

was out of the gates, and out of sight of the sentries. Thank you for reminding me of it. But my destination is not part of the password," Nathaniel replied, as he extinguished his torch.

"It is the brother of the Captain of the Guard, as sure as I am a son of Abraham," one of the other men interposed. "Let him go. He is sent to reconnoitre. The God of our Fathers guide you aright!"

Nathaniel was shown a door among the ruins of the vast edifice which at the outbreak of hostilities, had been burnt down together with the place where the archives were deposited, whence he could pass into an unused way, leading into more frequented streets. Through these he tottered along until he got to the Upper Market. There he was but a few steps from his parents' house, and he could not bring it over himself to pass by without seeing how Giezi and Rachel and the invalid Ruth were. Ben Caiaphas and Eleazar had left the grey-haired servitor and the two women behind as care-takers when they fled from the victorious Galileans and took refuge in the temple.

While the lame beggar was crossing the square to reach the old familiar door of the courtyard, he was met by a boy who seemed anxious to screen himself from observation in the shade of the wall. Surely he knew that figure! It was—but ought he to make himself known? Nathaniel averted his face, and was in the act of passing his old playfellow without a sign of recognition, when the boy addressed him thus: "I am sure you are badly off, poor man. Here take these two *gera* and buy yourself bread. Paulina will not mind my giving them in alms."

"May the Lord reward you a thousandfold," Nathaniel answered, as his character of mendicant required. But at the same moment he unguardedly turned his countenance towards his benefactor, and a passing moon-beam fell on it.

"For heaven's sake! Why you are Nathaniel!" the boy exclaimed.

"Do not speak so loud—and you are Benjamin. I was going to pass you without a word, though it cost

me dear. But since you have recognized me, I am heartily glad to see you, though I owe you a grudge about that fine Centurion. How could you get me into such a scrape? My father and brother nearly beat me to death."

"I am sorry for you, but your brother would have killed him, and I could not let him do that, for the good Roman saved my father's life. I will tell you all the whole story some other time, and more too, that happened to me since then. But you must have fared ill since you are reduced to begging! And you seem to have broken your leg, you poor dear fellow! Come with me at once and let Eusebius bind it up; he set my sister Thamar's fractured ancle so well that no one could tell that anything was the matter with it, come, lean on me."

"It is not necessary, I can walk quite properly. But where are you living now, so that I can come and see you some other time, when I am more at leisure. You may trust me, I shall not let it out to Eleazar. When you disappeared, he turned the whole city upside down to find you and your sister, and let me tell you, it would have gone ill with you if you had fallen into his hands, for he swore to take signal vengeance on you all, especially on the Centurion."

Benjamin laughed. "The Centurion," he said, "is safe out of his way long ago. But look here, I would rather tell you of some place where we might meet than show you our house. Not that I mistrust you, but I was strictly forbidden to let any one know where we live. You might possibly betray us unawares."

"Yet you said just now you would take me there to have my foot bound up," Nathaniel said in a tone of surprise.

"I was not going to take you to our house, but to that of Eusebius the physician. It is not far from here. Come I will show you the way."

Nathaniel hesitated a moment, then he replied: "I will tell you the truth. I know you are to be depended upon. Take back your money, I am not really a beggar, and am only pretending to be lame that I may not be recognized as Eleazar's brother. My brother is sending

me on an important errand, that is why I came from the temple in disguise. Now farewell. I am just going home to see Rachel and the others, then I must start on my journey; I cannot tell you whither or why I am going. Only implore your Angel guardian, in whom you have so much confidence, to protect and prosper me on my way."

"I will do so. Only I hope your errand is a good one, you know very well that you ought not to lend your assistance to anything that is bad, although Eleazar threatens to beat you."

"Well, Eleazar knows more about such matters than I do, and he considers this proposal to be the best for the purpose of defending the holy city and the temple against the Romans," Nathaniel replied.

Benjamin sighed as he said: "It will be of no use. We know for certain that not a stone shall remain upon another."

"You deserve to be stoned for speaking in that manner of the holy place," Nathaniel answered angrily. "If you speak like that again, you and I shall be friends no longer."

"Do not be angry with me. God knows how earnestly I pray that the divine chastisement may not fall upon Jerusalem. Give me your hand and let us part friends. When and where shall I see you again?"

"It is not easy to say, since you will not show me where you live. I shall not be back for at least a week," Nathaniel answered.

"Well, I tell you what, I will get Rhode to let me make all her purchases for her on the eve of the Sabbath, and I will always come this way in the twilight. So we can meet here."

Nathaniel agreed to this proposal and the two friends parted.

As Nathaniel turned away, he repeated the name of Rhode to himself. It was an uncommon name, and he could not think where he had heard it before. Boys have a good memory for little gifts, and before long there rose up before his mental vision the image of a little house in the garden hard by, and a goodnatured



maid servant who often gave him a handful of figs off a large old fig-tree that stood there.

"That is the one," he said to himself. "How was it I did not think of it before. I know Benjamin went there when he ran away from our house. He knew Paulinus, and wanted to buy some of his white doves. But would they venture to hide themselves there under our very eyes? I must make sure about that."

Shouldering his crutch, the boy hurried after his friend, who had just disappeared round the next corner. Happily there was no one in the street to witness the sudden cure of the lame mendicant. He was in time to see Benjamin turn in at the little garden door which led to the familiar house where the white doves were.

Having satisfied his curiosity, Nathaniel told himself that he would take care not to betray his friend's hiding-place. Then he remembered the part he had to act, and limped back to the gate of his father's house. He had to knock repeatedly before old Giezi opened the sliding shutter, and asked in a surly voice what was the matter? No one lived there but some old people and invalids. And when he caught sight of the beggar, he thrust the shutter to with a bang, and to the boy's infinite amusement turned away in a very stormy mood.

"Giezi, old fellow, open your eyes before you pour out the vials of your wrath," he called out, and the old servant instantly recognized his dear young master's voice. In a few moments Nathaniel was indoors.

Rachel, who resigned herself to her unhappy lot with a melancholy patience, was delighted to see the boy again. Nathaniel had often cheered her in seasons of distress, and on the other hand he owed it to her influence that although brought up in Caiaphas' unblest house, he had imbibed a very different spirit to that which animated his brother Eleazar.

Hence Nathaniel looked up to his sister-in-law as if she were his mother, and saluted her as such. When she heard that Eleazar was sending him on a perilous enterprise, she would fain have dissuaded him from going. But she was too much afraid of her husband to venture on doing so, therefore she contended herself with over-

whelming him with good advice, urging on him the necessity of caution and prudence, and preparing for him his favorite dish, which the boy found far more acceptable than her counsels. And while engaged in her culinary operations, she asked with unfeigned affection after Eleazar. She was one of those women not unfrequently met with, whose attachment to their husband seems to increase in proportion to the ingratitude, harshness and neglect wherewith it is rewarded.

"Nathaniel," she said, "you must not judge your brother hardly, if he often appears to treat me unkindly. He is a man of war, and his one thought day and night is how to accomplish the deliverance of Israel. And your father may mean well, though perhaps he is not fortunate in the choice of means whereby to save his nation. You must honor him, for the law of God commands it."

"I will try to do so, Rachel, certainly I will. If only he treated grandfather better—he is his father," Nathaniel rejoined, with downcast looks.

"Well, well, child. But you know he is now possessed by an evil spirit, and one cannot let him go raving about the streets in that condition," Rachel said in justification of the boy's father.

"Poor grandfather! I am afraid he made some mistake about that man from Nazareth whom he condemned to be crucified. And if that man's terrible prediction about the temple were to be accomplished. But no; I cannot, I will not think that God has abandoned His people. Now let me go to Ruth, it is such a long time since I saw her."

Rachel took a lamp from its pedestal and conducted him to the chamber where the sick girl lay hovering between life and death. She lay there patiently, her wax-like countenance, its pallor only revealed by the blue veins visible on her temples, had almost a corpse-like appearance. But her eyes were still bright, and a pleasant smile played about her colorless lips, as her brother came to her side. He called her by name, and stroked her thin white hands, which moved restlessly on the coverlet, and hardly had strength to return the pressure of her brother's grasp.

Then, to both Rachel's and Nathaniel's astonishment, Ruth, who in general scarcely said a word, opened her lips and began to speak in a low but distinct voice. "I am glad, brother, that you came before I am called hence. Today I saw Him again, the one who taught me to suffer. I had not seen Him for a long time, and never so clearly as today. Never did He look so beautiful. The expression of His eyes is grave and kind. His hands and feet are pierced, and from His opened side there shines a light brighter than the rays of the midday sun. When I was suffering so much, and prayed, He appeared bearing a cross on His shoulders, and invited me to carry it after Him. Today He smiled upon me, and told me you would come before He took me to Himself. Then you were to call His servant Eusebius, who lives in the old palace of David, he would prepare me for the heavenly nuptial feast. Please brother, summon him at once. And do not go on the errand Eleazar entrusted you with, it is for no good end. And tell him and father that they ought to do penance, for the day of retribution is near at hand."

These words from the sick girl's lips made a deep impression on her brother and sister-in-law. They had never heard Ruth talk like that, but she was evidently not wandering. She lay so still on her pillows that one might think she was asleep.

Rachel turned to Nathaniel. "Go and fetch that man. You see that it is the will of God, for it is unquestionably the Spirit of God speaking by her mouth."

Nathaniel went, and in a short time came back with Eusebius the Priest, who remained alone with the dying girl for a while, and administered baptism to her. Then he went and brought the holy viaticum. After Ruth had received the Bread of Heaven, she said to her brother and sister-in-law, who were again standing by her bedside: "Now He who called me has come. Watch and pray, for the hour of departure will come for you also. But do not be afraid, the Lord knoweth those that are His, and He will seek them out. Farewell, peace be with you."

Then she closed her weary eyes, never to open them again on earth.

## CHAPTER 38.

### In the House of Mary again.

When Nathaniel's first outburst of grief had somewhat subsided, he wended his way before the day dawned, to the Asmonean palace, and was readily allowed access to the underground passage.

Eleazar stared when the lad so unexpectedly entered his presence. "Did the sentry at the Gate of the Essenes refuse to let you pass, or have you been guilty of some atrocious folly?" he asked angrily. But when he heard the dying Ruth's message, and the boy declared that nothing on earth should induce him to do what his sister had said was wrong, he went in such a rage that Nathaniel almost thought he would kill him.

"What a blockhead you are, what a poor fool, to let yourself be frightened by the delirious ravings of a silly girl!" he said when he grew cooler. "You deserve a sound thrashing, instead of the suit of armor I promised you. In the future your place will be to help in the kitchen. You certainly are not worthy to fight for Israel's freedom. And my plan shall be carried out all the same!"

Nathaniel was really made to serve the cooks, whose duty it was to prepare the meals of some thousand Zealots in one of the halls adjoining the temple. At first he did not mind this, for his sister's holy death was continually present to his thoughts. But after a few days the monotony and tediousness of the work assigned him was so wearisome that he began to think how he could make good his escape. If he could only manage to gain access to the subterranean way, he would soon get free. He got a torch in readiness and watched his brother's movements until he discovered where he kept the key to the subterranean passage, and one evening he ventured upon flight. All succeeded as well as heart could wish. The sentries at the other end made a little

difficulty about letting him pass, for the watchword had been changed. But as they knew him to be brother to their Captain, and he told them he had to go to Caiaphas' house, the officer in command did not detain him.

"Eleazar himself is going there tonight in order to receive the brethren at the Essene Gate," said one of the sentries.

"True, and old Ben Caiaphas too. They have probably sent the lad beforehand, with some message," the officer replied.

Nathaniel heard what was said, and resolved to keep clear of his father's house, and seek a hiding-place where Benjamin was. He had in forming his plan of escape, kept the house with the white doves before his mind as his ultimate destination, though he intended first of all to get Rachel to conceal him in some remote part of the rambling old house.

When he stepped out into the street, a violent gush of wind blew in his face. Dark clouds with ragged edges of an ominous grayish color were drifting rapidly across the sky, and the wind roared and howled as if the spirits of hell were let loose. The dust and sand were blown in eddying circles in the air, stones fell from the roofs, and Nathaniel shrank close to the wall for shelter. Would it not be wiser, he asked himself, to go back to the Asmonean palace and there wait until the storm was over? But the thought of his father and brother, who might come up at any moment, induced him to proceed on his way.

Happily for him he had not to face the wind, so he was driven before it up to the market, where he was fain to hold on to a post, to recover his breath and wipe the dust out of his eyes. Light feathery gray clouds were coming up over the dark masses and some heavy drops fell, followed by a shower of hail, at first small stones, then large and heavy ones rattled on the pavement. A flash of lightning like a stream of molten fire rent the heavens, succeeded by a crash and crackling as if the houses all around were falling down.

"God have mercy on us!" ejaculated Nathaniel; "never did I see such a tempest. How ever shall I get over the rest of the way?"

He knocked at several doors, but no one opened to him. Perhaps his knock was not heard amid the raging of the elements. He told himself he must venture, and throwing his cloak over his head as a protection against the hailstones, ran as quickly as he could in the direction of the garden gate he knew so well. One peal of thunder followed the other in rapid succession and the lightning fell, setting fire to several buildings in different quarters of the town. The falling hailstones beat upon the boy's head, arms and hands till they bled, and in piteous accents he said: "If they do not open the door quickly they will find me lying there dead."

In the modest house that was called by our Lady's name, the outbreak of the terrific storm found Thamar and her brother, with the two servants, kneeling beside Paulina's bed, joining with her in prayer. A lamp was burning before the miraculous image of the thorn-crowned Saviour, and its feeble light fell upon the group of suppliants. Thamar read the ninetieth psalm, and the others repeated it after her verse by verse. At the loudest peals of thunder Rhode cried out in alarm: "The end of the world has come! The Lord will destroy the city with fire from Heaven! Lord have mercy on us!" Sara closed her eyes and put her fingers in her ears; Thamar and Paulina fixed their gaze on the features of the Redeemer, to which the flickering light seemed to give a life-like movement. Benjamin, who was not easily alarmed, was almost paralyzed with terror; he too looked at the face of Christ as if entreating pardon for his past misdeeds.

A momentary lull in the violence of the tempest ensued; the hail was still heard rattling against the shutters, and the howling wind shook the very walls of the house. Suddenly Benjamin exclaimed: "Listen! some one is knocking at the garden door! I thought I heard it just now, this time I am quite certain."

"What could any living soul want to come to us for in such a frightful storm?" Rhode said.

"Perhaps it is God's angel, come to lead us out of this city, as he did Lot out of Sodom. I have prayed for that every day. Otherwise however shall we get out

of Jerusalem and escape the divine judgments," Benjamin answered. "If you will come with me, Thamar, I will go and let him in; I am afraid to go alone."

Thamar rose and said she would accompany him. "It must be some poor creature, who asks for shelter," she said.

They had some difficulty in unfastening the door. When it was opened they found the unfortunate youth lying on the ground half fainting, bruised by the hail-stones and wholly exhausted.

They took him indoors, and under the care of the women he was soon sufficiently recovered to tell his story. In conclusion he said: "One thing more. To-night Ben Gioras' bands are to be admitted into the city. If you have anything to conceal from them hide it at once, for I heard Eleazar say that robbery and murder would be the least of the evils we might expect from their coming; if only they would help him to get the mastery over the Galileans before the coming of the Romans, so that they might oppose them with a united force."

There were no treasures of gold or silver to be concealed by the inmates of Mary's house, but there was something they prized more than any earthly possessions, Veronica's veil. It was forthwith taken down from the wall, enclosed in its copper case and stowed away in the cellar. Thamar also looked out for a place where she could hide, so as not to fall into the hands of the ruffians who might make her their prisoner, or otherwise maltreat her.

Meanwhile the storm had risen again, and went on raging nearly till midnight. Flavius Josephus says "the flashes of lightning, the awful roll of the thunder, the quaking of the earth, filled everyone with terror; it was as if the very foundations of the world were shaken and the destruction of its inhabitants imminent.<sup>1)</sup> And under cover of this tempest the Zealots admitted the bands of Simon Ben Gioras into the city; he entered through the Essene Gate during the night with ten thousand of his own followers and five thousand Idume-

<sup>1)</sup> Wars of the Jews IV. 4, 5.

ans. Josephus relates that they held their shields over their heads to keep off the torrents of rain, and pressed close one to the other to warm their frozen limbs.

Then a terrible carnage commenced. When morning dawned thousands of slain were seen on the declivities of the temple hill. More fell victims to the assassin's poniard than to the enemy's sword. Amongst the former were Ananas the ex-Highpriest and Jeschua, all in fact who were considered antagonists of the Zealots. Yet Ben Gioras did not succeed in driving John of Gischala out of the fortress Antonia and the outer enclosure of the temple. All the other parts of the city with the exception of the quarter called Ophel remained in his power. According to Josephus eight thousand five hundred fell in battle during the night. The Zealots, during the reign of terror that succeeded the entrance of the Robbers, slaughtered twelve thousand victims.<sup>1)</sup>

Before the night was ended two or three of the brigands made their way into the House of Mary. Old Sara showed them the poorly furnished rooms, and for the sake of the sick woman entreated them to have pity and spare them the helpless inmates. "Are no Galileans, no soldiers hidden here?" the man asked threatening the old woman with his drawn sword.

"None but women and two young boys, as sure as I hope for the salvation of Israel," she answered, falling on her knees.

The man bade her show him the boys. Taking a lamp, she led him into Paulinus' room, where Nathaniel was sleeping heavily through exhaustion. Benjamin started up when the door opened and the robbers entered.

"Why, that is Tubal the red-head!" he exclaimed, recognizing at a glance the red-headed brigand who had taken him from the robber's camp into the city.

"That I am, by our father Ismael!" the man rejoined. "And you the pretty little bird that I had to take to that old sinner Zabulon. Did you find your father again, my little friend?"

<sup>1)</sup> Ibid. 4, 1, 3.



"I found him and lost him again. O Tubal, have you taken him captive again since then or even killed him? Pray do tell me. You know nothing about him? Then perhaps he is still alive. And Salome, have you not released her yet?"

"We never let anyone go free without a ransom, not even an old woman like that," rejoined the robber, with a coarse laugh. "No, the old thing is still with our gang, and will probably come in here along with us. Her skill as a cook has saved her life, no one can serve up so good a dinner for our Captain, and Ben Gioras is by no means indifferent on that point. Who is that other fellow yonder? He is almost big enough to be one of those cursed Galilean rogues. Get up, you there!"

"Let him be," Benjamin entreated. "You see he is bruised all over with the hail; he is no Galilean, I assure you; you know I never lie."

Tubal hesitated a moment, and his comrade called out: "Be quick, Brother; either cut his throat or leave him alone. Let us go to some other house, there is nothing to be got out of these beggarly folk." Thereupon they both left the house.

"So good old Salome will come in with the robbers," Benjamin said to himself, debating whether he should not go out on the morrow and try to find her. "She knows her way about Jerusalem, and will soon find out where Eusebius is living in the old palace. How delighted the worthy man will be when he sees her again." Reflecting thus, the boy fell fast asleep, and did not wake, despite the noise and commotion in the streets, until daylight streamed in through the little window of the chamber.

Nathaniel was already awake, contemplating the bloody marks on his hands and arms with a rueful countenance. Benjamin assured him that they would soon be well; then he drew his attention to the disturbance outside in the city. "Just listen, what lamentations and outcries, as if the world were coming to an end! And the clash of arms that comes down from the temple! Hear the stones whizzing through the air from the catapults!"

"They are fighting to gain possession of the temple," Nathaniel said. "Eleazar is determined that the Galileans shall be driven out. My father and brother are both there. May God be merciful to them!"

All day long the battle raged on the hill, and pillage and murder went on in the city. Not until the next morning was anything approaching tranquillity restored, so that Rhode could go out to learn what they had to expect. On her return she said that the streets were filled with the dead and dying, and that now instead of two, three factions were at war in the city. For the Galileans would not be expelled from the precincts of the temple, and dissension and strife had already broken out between Ben Gioras and the Zealots who had applied to him for aid, since Eleazar insisted on the Brigand-chief obeying his orders. The destruction of the city appeared imminent, for had not the Lord Himself declared that a kingdom divided against itself could not stand.

In the evening of the same day Eusebius, having taken every precaution to escape notice, came to bring Holy Communion to Paulina, who was much worse in consequence of all the distressing events that had happened. He afterwards looked at Nathaniel's bruises and said there was not much harm done; let him stay in bed a couple of days. "Your pious sister must have protected you in Heaven," he said kindly, "otherwise it might have gone ill with you. Your arms and hands are painful, no doubt, but there is nothing to be alarmed about. But if you had been struck on the head and temples, it might have been your death."

"Should I have gone to hell?" Nathaniel asked, horrorstricken.

"I hope not, as you have not resisted the truth. But you will do well to place yourself under instruction and be baptized, as your sister was. At present no one is sure of his life from one hour to another. Your friend Benjamin can teach you the fundamental truths of the Faith, and then I can baptize you both at the approaching Feast of the Pasch. What do you say to that?"

Benjamin was delighted at the prospect of receiving

baptism so soon, for in the early ages of the Church the sacrament of regeneration was not generally administered until a long probation had been gone through. And the idea of being allowed to teach one older than himself made him quite proud. Suddenly he remembered Salome, and told Eusebius what he had heard about her from the brigand.

Eusebius smiled and said: "Your red-headed friend spoke the truth, I have already seen her. She came to my house yesterday evening. Praise be to the Lord for granting me such a joy in these sad and troublous times!"

"Then I will go back with you. Pray let me. I must see dear old Salome again," the boy entreated, with eager eyes.

"She is not in my house," Eusebius rejoined. "She has gone back to her work at Ben Gioras' camp, she promised to do so when she asked his permission to visit me."

"Alas!" the boy said. "How long is she to do a slave's work for that wicked man? Why does she not run away from him? Here there would be no rocks to climb or jackals to fear. Tell her to come to us and we will hide her away with Thamar, as the Centurion and I hid ourselves."

"Ben Gioras would never rest till he found her, then he would have her scourged nearly to death, and make an end of us all. No, no child, her lot is not so miserable, and at any rate she must put up with it a little longer. She will see me now and again, and I might perhaps bring her here to see you. Meanwhile I am maturing a plan I made long ago by which, with the help of God, she will be rescued and all of you as well. Pray for its success!" So saying the Priest took his departure.

The two friends now had a pleasant time. Benjamin instructed Nathaniel, and if the older scholar was somewhat incredulous about any point, his young teacher called Rhode with her ready tongue, or Thamar with her well-stored mind to his help, and not unfrequently it turned out that the teacher's explanations were not

altogether correct. But Benjamin would not give in, unless Thamar and Rhode agreed, and Paulina declared they were right.

The lesson-hours left plenty of time for games and recreation. The two boys related their adventures to one another. Benjamin's tongue would run on for hours, when he told how he and Paulinus and Lucius were let down the wall in a basket and made their escape to Caesarea. Then he described the sea and the great ships, and the huge waves that broke upon the shore throwing up clouds of spray, things which Nathaniel had never seen. Finally he gave an account of his father's embarkation and how he was placed under the care of Jonas the shipowner.

"I always thought no good would come of that arrangement," he concluded, "as soon as ever I saw the man with his long nose and fishy eyes. I begged father to take me with him to Greece, but he said it would not do for me to go with him, I must stay with Jonas, who would treat me kindly, and he himself would come back soon. Treat me kindly! The very first evening he gave me a flogging, the worst I ever had in my life. For three days I did not know how to sit on my chair. Well, I got over that; besides I deserved it because I did not go home as he bade me. But what business had he to order me to go home, when I asked him so politely to let me remain on the beach, as long as my father's ship was in sight. I wanted to see the trireme sail, too. Yet I could have forgiven him the beating, but that his two boys should taunt me with it for weeks was more than I could endure. God forgive me if I did wrong; but once I could not contain myself and I gave the elder one a sound thrashing, though he is two years older than I am. And I should have thrashed the other as well, for I was downright angry, only his father came up and beat me black and blue, repeating some pious exhortation, because I would not beg his son's pardon. And that is called treating one kindly!"

"I should have run away," Nathaniel said.

"Yes, it came to that, you shall hear. I should have run away the first day, only I hoped that my sister

would come soon, and that Father would not be away for long. Besides where was I to go to? So I put up with the beating and the teasing as well as I could and determined to bide my time. Then one day the Arab whom my father had sent to Jerusalem came back without having accomplished his errand, and told Jonas he had not been able to succeed in getting into the city; in fact he had a narrow escape of being stoned for a Roman spy. Jonas told him to his face that he lied, and had made up this story to get the money my father had left for him; I do not think he paid him a single *gera*. At all events the man went away in a towering rage."

Nathaniel remarked that it was very possible that the Arab spoke the truth, for his brother had the gates strongly guarded.

"That was all the same to me — I knew then it was no use to expect Thamar any longer. A few days later a ship arrived from Greece. As soon as I heard one of the servants telling that to Jonas, I ran off as fast as my legs would carry me to the harbor; it was forbidden, but I said to myself, my father is there now, so Jonas has no more authority over me. But unfortunately Father was not on the ship, there came instead a letter from him to Jonas, saying that they had to go on to some other town where the Emperor was, and that would delay his return for some months. Of course I could not help crying — I think you would have cried too — at these tidings, and in addition I had to bear another beating for having gone down to the harbor without permission; and Reuben actually said it was a good thing that my father stayed away, for the longer he remained in Greece, the better-behaved I should have become by the time of his return."

"Did you not box his ears for his impertinence?" Nathaniel interposed.

"I thought it was better not to, for I was still sore from the beating and Jonas was in the room, but I gave him a look that said more than a box on the ear. Then I sat down and wrote a letter to my father telling him what sort of treatment I got in Jonas' house. I addressed it: To my dear father, the Rabbi Sadoc, with the

Emperor in Greece, and I begged Jonas to send it by the next vessel that sailed for Greece. Do you think he did that? No such thing! He read it through and tore it in pieces before my very eyes!"

"What a brute!" Nathaniel exclaimed.

"That was enough for me. I did not say another word. But as soon as it was dark, I ran away to Queen Berenice, who once gave me some cakes and sweet wine, when I told her the story of my flight from Jerusalem. I did not like her much; she had such a strange manner and was always stroking and fondling me, and smelt so strong of all sorts of perfumes. But she had a sister whom I much preferred, and I wanted to go to her. However the man who used to bow so obsequiously to the Centurion took me to the Queen, and when I told her and her ladies all that I had gone through in Jonas' house, they tittered and laughed, as if it were a good joke. I was so annoyed that I was on the point of running away again, then and there, for I could not bear to have women make fun of me.

"Then they gave me all manner of dainties and grapes and sweet wine. And Berenice had a beautiful sky-blue tunic made for me and lovely sandals with gold fastenings up to the knee. She hung a little silver quiver over my shoulder with gilt arrows and put a pretty little bow in my hand. In that costume I had to stand in her room, and sometimes go out with her. At first I liked it, I was proud of my fine clothes and the elegant bow and arrows. People called me Berenice's *Eros*, I thought it was *Heros* which means hero and when she called me *Eros*, I corrected her and said *Heros*. Then she laughed and said: '*Eros* now, perhaps *Heros* later on!'

"I wanted to know what *Eros* meant, as I did not remember hearing the word when Thamar taught me Greek. Berenice laughed in such a strange way that I ran off, and asked the man-servant what it meant. When he told me it was the name of a heathen god, I threw down my quiver and bow and instantly went off to my room where I put on my old tunic that I was wearing when I ran away from Jonas' house."

"You were right there," Nathaniel said, "otherwise you might have been led into idolatry."

"Yes, that is what the venerable Eusebius told me; the only thing he praised me for doing, was making my escape from Berenice's palace. He blamed me severely for having run away from Jonas. And I am very sorry that I did, for it was wrong, and it must have caused my father great vexation. I daresay he has been looking for me, and perhaps grieving for me, thinking I was dead. God grant that we may meet again!"

"So you actually left the Queen's palace then and there?"

"Of course I did, or else I should not be here now. And this time everything went well with me, for I prayed to my Guardian Angel. A kind trader who was going to the country east of the Jordan with some merchandise took me as far as Sichem, where our father Abraham dwelt, and Jacob fed his flocks. There I joined a caravan of pilgrims, who were journeying to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication of the temple. They came from Nazareth; when I asked them about Jesus, they told me that in His youth He set a good example and was in all respects an excellent and obedient son. They were surprised therefore, they said, that the promise God made to those who honor their parents was not fulfilled in Him, that He had such a hard life and met with so untimely and sad a death. I should like to have set them right about that, as I remembered what Eusebius had taught me, but they would not let a child seem to know better than they did, so I held my tongue, or they would not have kept me with them."

"It is a singular thing," Nathaniel remarked, "that his own countrymen will not believe in Jesus."

"Have you never read that passage of Scripture which says that a prophet never has honor in his own country?" Benjamin said. Then he proceeded: "So I came back to Jerusalem. You can fancy how frightened I was at having to go through the gate. I looked all round as if I were a thief, for fear lest I should fall into the hands of your brother or your father. I was not afraid of you, for I did not think you would betray me."

“Never — although I had scoldings and beatings enough to bear on your account.”

“I hid myself until it was dark, then I cautiously crept here. I can tell you Rhode was astonished to see me when she opened the door, and Thamar kissed me and scolded me alternately. She was able to walk quite well again, and I wanted Eusebius to let us down over the wall in a basket the very next night; I said I would show Thamar the way to Caesarea, and there we would wait for father’s return — not in Jonas’ house, but in a pretty little villa by the sea. But no one would listen to my project, for in the interval the war in Galilee and on the coast broke out. So we are still here, waiting for a favorable opportunity to escape out of the city. God knows when we shall find one!”

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## CHAPTER 39.

### **Paulinus returns to Jerusalem.**

The Feast of the Passover was now approaching, the last which the temple at Jerusalem was destined to witness.

When the war broke out in Galilee and on the coast of Palestine, the inhabitants of Judea in vast numbers had sought refuge in the holy city with their herds and their goods and chattels. Immense as was the stock of provisions which they brought with them, corn, oil, wine, fruits of all kinds, besides provender for the cattle, the stores had gradually melted away in the course of three years, since the Romans drew the cordon of their troops ever nearer and nearer to the doomed city. The husbandman hardly dared to sow his corn, the herdsman scarcely ventured to drive his flocks and herds to pasture for fear lest the Romans or the robbers should reap his crops, slaughter his cattle. Thus as the storehouses became empty it was not possible to replenish them.

Heedless of the armies which had long lain inactive in the camps at Caesarea, Jericho and Hebron, the population of Judea and those who had escaped the sword of the Roman soldier in Galilee and beyond Jordan, hastened up to the holy city to keep the Feast. The troops opposed no hindrance to the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem; Titus had given orders that they were not to be molested, for the greater the number of people confined within its walls, the sooner would starvation and misery compel them to surrender. All therefore who were going up thither were to be allowed to pass, but the pilgrims who were returning to their homes were to be driven back ruthlessly.

In one of the bands of pilgrims coming up from Jericho, Paulinus was to be found. It was not that he was unmindful of the words of prophetic warning uttered by the Saviour, but he was urged by affection for his

mother and also by the wish of Bishop Simeon, who wanted to remit a portion of the alms received from Rome to Eusebius the priest, with his episcopal blessing. "Go in peace, my son," the holy old man said to the youth, on his departure from Pella, "I shall pray for you and those dear to you, that they may escape the coming judgments. Our brethren who are detained in the city need some special encouragement. This you will afford them by the tidings of the glorious death of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and by the benediction of the saintly Linus, who now, as Peter's successor in the office of Chief Pastor, feeds the sheep and lambs of Christ's flock."

So it came to pass that Paulinus left Pella and started on his journey with a cheerful heart. In Bethania he parted from the company in order to visit the property formerly belonging to Lazarus, where he had spent many happy days in his boyhood, when Eusebius and Salome managed the farm. As he wandered through the forsaken garden, he smiled to himself as he remembered that it had once been his cherished dream to become steward of the estate, when he had grown up to manhood. Now a very different lot was the goal of his desires, he hoped to become a Priest, and a preacher of the Word of God.

Bishop Simeon had commissioned him to bring with him on his return to Pella, the portrait of the Blessed Virgin, painted by St. Luke. On their hasty flight from Jerusalem it had been left in Bethania, where for a time at least, it would probably be safe. Paulinus went up to the house, which was shut up, and presently in answer to his knocking the door was unfastened by Silas the gardener, who instantly recognized the young Levite. The picture still hung in its old place on the wall, and the gardener had not neglected to place flowers before it daily.

"However shall you take it with you into the city?" Silas asked, for he was unwilling to part with the sacred relic. "It is painted on a board of cedar-wood, so you cannot possibly hide it under your clothes. And if the gate-keepers see it, they are certain to burn it and stone

you. That was the reason why Eusebius did not take it into the city. You had better leave it here, and when you come back from the Feast you can if you choose take it with you to Pella."

Paulinus saw the justice of these arguments and agreed to do as the man proposed. With him he visited the cave where our Lord performed the striking miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, and piously prayed there awhile. The gardener accompanied him part of the way to Jerusalem talking as he went of the terrible signs and portents which were reported to have been seen. The dreadful comet had disappeared then, but in its place chariots and horses and troops of men in armor were seen in the clouds, waging war with spear and sword. It was an awful sight, the man said, so at least people coming from Gabaoth Saul had told him, who had seen it a few days before. "And," he concluded, "the atrocities perpetrated in Jerusalem, the blood that cries to Heaven shed in the city, nay even in the temple, at the very foot of the altar! On no consideration would I spend a single night in the city. I beg you to come back and bring your mother with Rhode and the others, out here to Bethania. We shall get on better with the Romans than with those stiff-necked Jews. God forgive me, if I am too hard on them."

The young Levite told the worthy old man that it was his intention to take as many of the brethren as possible out of Jerusalem, before the divine judgments overtook them. He then parted from him, and pursued his way alone. It was nearly four years since he last saw the temple and the holy city, and it was with no ordinary emotion that he gazed at them. Considerable portions of the town lay in ruins through the cruel warfare, but the House of God still stood in its ancient glory, and as Paulinus approached, the trumpet blast was heard, and the column of smoke from the altar of sacrifice ascended above the golden roof. And on the north side, where alone the city was pregnable, the threefold wall and crown of towers seemed to bid proud defiance to the foe. Almost involuntarily the words of the inspired Psalmist rose to his lips: "The foundations

thereof are in the holy mountains; the Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God! The Lord shall tell in his writings of peoples and of princes, of them that have been in her. The dwelling in thee is as it were of all rejoicing." (Ps. 86.)

"Alas! if thou hadst known the time of thy visitation," sighed Paulinus, "that glorious prediction would have been fulfilled in thee. The Lord wept over thee, and foretold thy destruction. But the vision of the prophet shall yet be accomplished. The Church which Christ founded is the true city of God, which offers to all her members eternal salvation and fulness of joy, even to those who come out of Babylon and Egypt, from Tyre and the isles of the sea."

Engrossed with these reflections Paulinus reached the Fountain Gate by the pool of Siloe. The guard eyed the tall, slim youth who had just attained his twentieth year, with a sharp glance, and called on him to join Ben Gioras' band, and help in the defence of Sion. It was with difficulty that he escaped from the tiresome importunity of the men by telling them he was the only son of a needy widow, and should only take up arms in case of compulsion. In fact, they would have pressed him then and there into the service, had not the officer in command said: "Let the mother's darling go! He is no man of the sword and would bring disgrace on our brave comrades by his poltroonery."

Paulinus repressed the indignant rejoinder that rose to his lips and thanked the Captain. A shout of derisive laughter followed him as he pursued his way. When he entered the city, he thought he never remembered seeing so many people in the streets. To the many thousand refugees who for months past had taken up their abode in Jerusalem, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims come to keep the great festival were now added. Flavius Josephus estimates the numbers present in the city that year at the Pasch at two millions, while Eusebius of Caesarea reckons them at three millions. They took up their abode in the half-demolished buildings, they set up huts and tents in the streets and in all the

public places. Paulinus had to elbow his way through the crowd to the Upper Market. "What," he asked himself, "would become of all these people, if Titus were now to bring his forces up to our gates?"

He made it his first business to go to the Cenacle to find Eusebius, and hand over to him the alms of the Community in Rome, which he had concealed in a leathern belt worn under his clothes. "The guard at the Fountain Gate nearly got hold of it," he said, "they wanted to commandeer me for military service. Thanks to the prayers of the saints, which accompanied me on my way, the Lord turned the heart of the Captain, and he let me go in peace."

"God be thanked," ejaculated Eusebius. "The charitable gift of our brethren in Rome comes most opportunely. We shall have to lay in a stock of provisions, lest we should be reduced to starvation in the days whereof the Lord foretold that our foes would surround the city with a wall, and press us on all sides. I hope to send a party of our people with you to Pella, but some will have to spend the days of tribulation here. For instance, your good mother could not possibly be moved. She continues much the same, and bears her cross with the same calm patience. I will go over to her with you presently."

"O Father, could not I remain with her, and you accompany the remnants of our little flock who will leave the city?" Paulinus said in tones of entreaty.

Eusebius answered: "I know you are willing to make the sacrifice, but you are not a Priest; the venerable Simeon has not given you my post. You must see that I cannot possibly accept your offer. Now tell me about our brethren in Rome; at nightfall we will go to your mother. Is it true that Cephas died for Christ, as report alleges?"

Paulinus then narrated the story of the heroic death of the two Apostles, and described the charity and zeal for the faith that animated the Christians in Rome in such glowing language, that tears of emotion rolled down Eusebius' wrinkled cheeks. He told Paulinus that he must relate the whole over again at the service

in the Cenacle at Easter. "What could be a greater solace, a more powerful support to my flock in these troublous days than the example Peter and Paul afford them? We shall baptize several persons then. A grandson of that unhappy Caiaphas, and Rabbi Sadoc's son are to be born again by water and the Holy Spirit. You remember the Rabbi whom we nursed in this house, and who was so sorely scandalized at the picture of Christ's sacred countenance?"

"Perfectly well. He is with us in Pella. As I was coming back from Rome to Caesarea, I happened to meet with him; he was in a state of despair at having lost both his children. I told him that his daughter was in the charge of excellent people, and would probably be in Pella, provided her foot was well, and suitable travelling companions had been found for her. So he went there with me, and there he is now, waiting, but waiting in vain, for his daughter's arrival. He mourns for her as for one who is dead, and he also despairs of ever finding his son again. Had he known that they were here, nothing would have kept him in Pella, although it would have been certain death for him, if those in authority were to recognize him."

"That is only too true," Eusebius replied. "Many a one has been put to death who was less obnoxious to the Zealots than this Rabbi Sadoc. Has he become one of our brethren?"

"Unhappily he still clings to his pre-conceived ideas about the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. Yet we hope for his conversion because he is very liberal in almsgiving."

"You are right, my son. 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.' Nothing draws down the grace of God upon the sinner more surely than works of charity. How delighted his daughter, and that merry boy of his will be when they hear that their father is in Pella, and that they may hope shortly to see him there. By this time I think it will be safe for us to go to the house of Mary."

Darkness had closed in, so the two set out at once. Eusebius, it need hardly be said, entered the sick-room

first, to prepare his patient for the joy awaiting her. Then he left the mother and son together. Paulinus had so much to tell her, and chiefly all about the glorious death of her illustrious brother, Paul the Apostle. "Follow him, my son," she said with tears in her eyes, "fight the good fight, for you too a crown of glory is laid up. Do not let your affection for me lead you to swerve from the path of a higher duty. Return to Pella, and thence go out into the world, to conquer it for Christ. He will fetch me from here in His own good time, and it is my daily prayer that He will not long delay."

Later on Paulinus told the sister and brother about their father, and the idea of soon meeting them again in Pella, filled their hearts with joy. He also spoke of Lucius the Tribune, and said that he had seen him in the prison where he was confined with St. Paul.

Thamar listened eagerly when the young officer was mentioned. She had often thought of him, often prayed for him. His image had always been present to her mind, ever since the day when he rescued her father and herself out of the hands of the robbers. When at a subsequent period she released him from captivity and was instructed with him in the Christian religion, she had occasionally thought she might one day be united to that high-principled Roman. But he had gone away without accepting the truth, and although at parting from her he did not disguise his affection he felt for her, yet there was scarcely ground for hope that he would ever return and ask for her hand. Still less did she venture to hope that her father would ever consent to her marriage with a Roman. Therefore she persuaded herself that she must make the sacrifice of her heart, and she imagined that reason showed her so clearly the futility of any such hopes, that they were altogether extinguished. Far from it! Again and again the flame was rekindled, and like a bright star piercing the dark clouds, it shone upon her path. In the inmost recesses of her soul she still hoped against hope.

Blushingly she inquired of Paulinus whether he had heard anything more concerning Lucius' fate. He answered in the negative, adding: "I have not the slightest

doubt that Paul converted him. What he did to ensure Peter's safety was enough to earn for him the gift of faith. Almighty God led him by the way of the cross, and that is the way of salvation. When he went to Rome, his head was full of other ideas, of high-flown projects; he fancied that earthly grandeur and renown awaited him, and instead of that Providence prepared for him imprisonment and probably a martyr's death. I made every exertion to obtain access again to Paul and his fellow-prisoners, but without success, and immediately after my uncle's death Linus sent me to Pella, with letters and alms. Since then I have heard nothing of Lucius. I thought I should obtain some information from Aquila, but he did not come to Pella, as he intended. The Romans, it appears, would not allow him to pass. Perhaps Lucius is still languishing in prison, more probably he has succumbed to the pestilential atmosphere of the dungeon and his soul has taken her flight to Heaven."

When Paulinus ceased speaking Thamar wiped a tear from her long eyelashes. "I do not grudge him the victory. There is no happiness to be had in this miserable world," she sighed. But even then she could not quite relinquish all hope.

The following days were taken up with preparing the catechumens for baptism, and instructing them in the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. Thamar, the two boys and old Sara, were to be baptized on Holy Thursday, the day whereon Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, and on Easter day they were to receive Holy Communion. How Thamar marvelled at the depth of divine charity, when Eusebius initiated her in this incomprehensible mystery of the Christian faith. In the presence of such love as this that the Saviour shows to us it appeared easy to her to renounce all earthly love and she asked the grey-haired Priest, if she might not consecrate herself to God by a vow of virginity. Eusebius would not hear of this, at least not at present; a resolution of that nature must not be made in a moment of emotion, of exaltation, but only after serious and mature deliberation.

Baptism was administered to the four candidates in



the crypt beneath the Cenacle without fear of interruption. With joy and elation they returned before break of day to Mary's house, where Rhode was waiting to welcome them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Even old Sara seemed thoroughly happy. She did not care what happened now, she would be quite content to die, she repeated several times. And Benjamin would not engage in any sports that day, he only fed the doves of our Lady as usual, saying to his sister, as the white-winged favorites circled about them, "Look, Thamar, now our souls are as spotless as they are. And if we were to die now, we should go up straight to Heaven. I could almost wish Eleazar might find us out and with a sweep of his sword cut the bonds that tie our souls to earth!"

"Yes, we are now children of God and heirs of Heaven, we wear the wedding garment washed in the blood of the Lamb," Thamar replied with a beaming countenance. "Now it behooves us to take heed not to soil our garments and lose the sanctifying grace conferred on us. That alone can harm us, death has no power. On the contrary he would come as a welcome messenger to conduct us to our eternal home, to the heavenly Sion."

"How I wish my mother could share this happiness." Nathaniel said. "As for my father and brother, they neither understand nor desire it."

Meanwhile Eusebius and Paulinus, together with Sabbas the porter consulted among themselves as to the means whereby they could send Thamar and Benjamin to their father at Pella. It did not appear to be a matter of great difficulty; on his journey to Jerusalem Paulinus had made the acquaintance of some wealthy people from the vicinity of Jericho; Thamar and Sara could join them and Paulinus could take the boy with him. It was not probable that they would be stopped at the gates, as there would be a multitude of pilgrims pouring out of the city, and Eleazar, who was the only person they dreaded was held captive in the inner temple. They deliberated also as to how the image of our Lord's sacred countenance, imprinted on Veronica's veil, and the chalice used at the Last Supper could be conveyed to

**Pella in safety.** Bishop Simeon was extremely anxious to preserve these hallowed relics from the destruction impending over Jerusalem. The veil could be rolled together and concealed under some part of the clothing. Eusebius proposed to confide it to Thamar's care, as she was both prudent and courageous. But he would not expose the chalice to the risk of being discovered by the sentinels at the gate, or by soldiers or robbers, and appropriated by them.

"It is the most precious memorial of the Saviour's love," he said. "Remember how on the evening before His bitter Passion he took this cup, blessed it, and pronounced over the wine words of solemn mystery. It is said that the prototype in the priestly office, Melchisedec, king of Salem, made use of this same chalice when he offered bread and wine, and afterwards he gave it to our father Abraham. No, I cannot consent to risk the loss of so priceless a treasure. I have found a safe hiding-place for it, where it would remain uninjured even if the city were destroyed by fire. I will show the place of concealment to you Paulinus, and you, Sabbas. I hope thus to safeguard this, the most precious of the Church's relics better than by sending it to Pella to the bishop. Now come, let me show you the place.

The old Priest was in the act of going, accompanied by the youth and Sabbas the porter, when Rhode came running up, to say that a messenger had just arrived, bringing the tidings that the Romans were marching upon the city.

"How many of these false alarms we have had! I shall not believe it until I see the enemy before our walls," Sabbas exclaimed.

"This time the report is true," the servant replied. "The people are assembling in groups everywhere. Just hear, the trumpets are sounding from the towers and from the pinnacles of the temple."

"It is so, in fact," Eusebius said, as he listened to the unwelcome blast. "Well, God's will be done! At any rate, if we possibly can we will celebrate our Easter festival the day after tomorrow."

## CHAPTER 40.

### The last Paschal Feast in Jerusalem.

The three party leaders who within the walls of Jerusalem were fighting a battle of life and death, had concluded an armistice for the days on which the Feast of the Passover was to be celebrated. The pilgrims, going up to offer their gifts, passed between ranks of armed men, both in the outer court of the temple and in the temple itself. Sad and bitter thoughts filled their minds, for everywhere around them they saw the abomination of desolation in the holy places. Here and there the pillars of the stately colonnade were broken; the polished surface of the marble walls was shattered, the roofs in many places were destroyed; nay the missiles thrown by the engines of war had even struck the altar of burnt offering, and felled the priests to the ground, even while in the performance of their sacred office, they laid the victim upon the sacrificial altar.<sup>1)</sup>

Even Eleazar was at length touched to the heart by scenes such as these. When he summoned Ben Gioras to his assistance, he did so in the belief that he would thus force the Galilean John of Gischala to submission, and restore union and concord to the unhappy city. Now, to his deep sorrow he perceived that he had only made matters worse. Thousands of lives had already been lost in this unholy warfare, and a large number of houses stored with corn and other provisions had been burnt down. Eleazar could have wept with shame and anger.

Despite his pride, his desire of revenge, his passionate temper, he was not destitute of a certain nobility of character. He was ready to sacrifice his ambition so far as to submit to the authority of a common leader, provided John and Ben Gioras would make peace. The temporary cessation of hostilities for the time of the

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus. De bello judaico V. 1, 3.

Feast was due to him. But he could not induce the enemies to conclude a lasting pacification. He then took the generous resolution to place himself and his Zealots under the command of the Galilean, in so far at least as was necessary for the joint defence of the temple, with the understanding that in case of necessity they should assist Ben Gioras in manning the walls of the city. More than this Eleazar could not accomplish.

On the eve of the day of preparation, the Council of Zealots assembled in the chamber Gasith had at length withdrawn their opposition and consented to this arrangement. Ben Caiaphas, Zabulon and a few others had reconciled themselves to it by thinking it might afford them an opportunity of transferring to their own pockets a good number of talents out of the treasury of the temple. Others agreed to it with the proviso that the truce with the hated Galilean, and the no less detested bandit, was only for the festival, and in case of attack on the part of the Romans who, they did not believe would really venture to besiege the sacred city. The most infatuated of the number declared all these measures to be wholly unnecessary and superfluous.

"The city is the city of God, and the temple is the dwelling place of the Lord of hosts," exclaimed the spokesman of this party, Meir Ben Belga, looking round with a sinister expression in his gleaming eye. "He Himself will be its defence. He will encompass us with a wall of fire, and blast our faces with hail and lightnings. Has He not said by the mouth of David His servant: Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord, and against His Christ. Let us break their bonds asunder, and let us cast away their yoke from us. He that dwelleth in the heaven shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall deride them. Then shall He speak to them in His rage. But I am appointed king by Him over Sion His holy mountain preaching his commandment. The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of

the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Whilst the fanatic was declaiming these words of Scripture in a wholly mistaken sense, a herald arrived, announcing the advance of the Romans. Eleazar had him brought in before the Council, and bade him speak for himself. The young man crossing his arms upon his breast, made a profound obeisance, and then began :

"Hear, O Fathers of my people, what your servant has to relate, and may the Lord grant that my words may be for your welfare and that of all the children of Abraham! I, your servant, have by Eleazar's orders, kept watch for many months on the height of Sapha, whence one can overlook the roads leading from Caesarea to the mountains. For some weeks past I noticed that all was astir in the Roman camp, and that reinforcements came in from Egypt. So I sent my son with the tidings that the Romans were coming. The announcement was premature; they did not march out until the day before yesterday. This time I remained at my post, in order to make sure of their intention and acquaint myself with their numbers. Then I set off hither, running all night and all day. So now hear what I have to say: One legion went south towards Lydda, so that it will come up through Emmaus, while the main body of the army marched under my very eyes on the road to Samaria, consequently it will come by way of the mountains of Samaria through Bethel.

"The enemy is in great force, may the Lord deliver them into your hands! The troops of king Agrippa marched first, gallantly arrayed, dressed up like women. I did not reckon their numbers, for I consider them to be chaff, which the first blast of your fury will scatter. These were followed by other auxiliaries, cavalry and infantry, some 30,000 men sent by the kings who are allied with Agrippa and the Romans. I saw the Arab Sheik too, Ben Gioras' ally, and I cursed him heartily."

The speaker was interrupted by an outburst of wrath on the part of the Zealots; then he continued :

"Next came the Romans. First the sappers and

miners and carpenters, then the commander's baggage, with an escort of soldiers. After them rode Titus, the general, with a select body of horsemen and lancers; he is still young and of bold aspect. The Lord confound him! The army itself followed; I tell you the earth shook under the tramp of the troops in their heavy armor. The horsemen belonging to each legion preceded them; after them came the engines of war, I counted as many as two hundred machines for hurling stones and other projectiles, rollers, wooden towers in separate pieces, beams and planks to construct a shelter for the besiegers, gigantic battering-rams and other things of which I did not know the use."

"They will all be a prey to the devouring flames," exclaimed Meir the son of Belga, in a tone of contempt.

"May your prediction be fulfilled before these diabolical engines touch the walls of God's holy city!" the messenger answered. Then he went on: "After the engines of war and those who guarded them rode the tribunes and leaders of the cohorts with some select warriors, then followed the trumpeters and the ensigns surrounding the silver eagle."

"The symbol of their chief deity!" cried Dalai. "How were it possible for the Lord our God to give victory to that abominable idol?"

"Behind the ensigns the legions marched in their ranks, each rank six deep. I can tell you there is not one amongst them but could wield his sword and lance effectively in defiance of a Goliath. Yet we know that the giant was slain by the youthful David in the valley of the Erebinthi. May their fate be the same as his! May all the baggage that followed every legion, all their arms and equipments fall into the hands of the children of Israel, and their corpses be the prey of the birds of heaven. As for the mercenaries who brought up the rear of the army, I did not count them, it was not worth while. The main body of the army I estimated at some 80,000 or 100,000 men. For other legions were coming up from Jericho and from Hebron."

Eleazar now proposed that Ben Gioras should go out with his followers to meet the troops who were advanc-

ing upon them from Emmaus, and defeat them in the narrow passes of the mountains, whilst he, together with the Galilean, held the main army in check at Bethel. The number of men capable of bearing arms at that time in the city was, he said, more than double that of the enemy, and any one who refused to take up arms against the Romans should be struck down on the spot. But by no arguments or entreaties could either of the two leaders of factions be persuaded to leave their posts within the city. Nor would they allow him to marshal the citizens and conduct them against the enemy. Neither of the leaders trusted the other, and they trusted Eleazar least of all. Thus there remained no alternative but to await the coming of the Romans in complete inactivity. The assembly broke up, each abusing the other, and attributing to one another the ruin of the city. In fact the parties almost came to blows and bloodshed within the precincts of the temple itself, whilst from its glittering pinnacles the silver trumpets proclaimed the commencement of the solemn festival. It was the afternoon of Good Friday, just about the hour at which, thirty-seven years previously, Jesus Christ died upon the cross.

At the same time that this was passing in the temple, the Christians who had remained in Jerusalem were assembled in the house of Mary for prayer, and the commemoration of Christ's death. The warm spring sun shone in through the windows, the flowers in the garden below gave out a delicate fragrance, and the white doves stood preening their feathers with their red beaks. Only when the trumpets in the temple sounded their loudest, the little flock rose up and in the air, then after wheeling two or three times round the house, settled again tranquilly on the edge of the roof, looking down with blinking eyes, to see if Benjamin or Thamar was not going to throw them their accustomed food.

The doves had to wait a considerable time. At the conclusion of the service, Eusebius stated the difficulties which the unexpected coming of the Romans put in the way of the projected flight to Pella. Addressing Thamar, he said: "I can scarcely venture to let you go, my daughter, in the face of the Roman legions. Your own

experience has taught you the danger of exciting their lust for gold, or other passions yet worse. I leave the decision to you."

"If you will allow me, I should prefer to remain here with Paulina. My father is well taken care of in Pella, and here, I do not doubt, there will be an opportunity of performing many acts of mercy. At all events we are in the hands of God; He will dispose of us, whether in life or in death."

"You can have till Easter day to think it over," Eusebius replied. "The Sabbath has begun and until the festival is at an end, there would be no possibility of finding travelling companions for you. When you receive the Bread of Life on Easter morning, you can ask counsel of the divine Guest of your soul, and then make up your mind. Sara, I suppose you are prepared either to go with Thamar or stay here with her."

"Whichever you and my dear foster-child think best," the old woman replied. "Yet I must say in my own heart I should say stay. For I have found a happy home here, and here I would gladly end my days."

"But you Paulinus, must attempt to make your way back to Pella to bishop Simeon, and take Veronica's veil to him. I have already spoken about it to your mother. And you Benjamin, my little friend, will go with him."

"And Nathaniel, is he to go with us or to stay behind?" Benjamin inquired of the Priest.

Nathaniel answered for him. "I should like to remain here." Then he whispered in Eusebius' ear: "for Rachel's sake, she has been a second mother to me. Now Ruth is dead, she has no one left—besides I hope to induce her, if not my father and brother, to be baptized."

"Very well, Nathaniel, you shall stay here and serve on the altar," Eusebius decided, rejoiced to see what a good heart the boy had.

"O Father Eusebius, I should like to serve your mass," Benjamin exclaimed with eager eyes. "Do pray let me remain here. I do not want to go to my father without Thamar. Pray, pray do! Paulinus can quite well go alone, and father's mind will be set at rest when he hears that we are both safe and well,"



Eusebius would not however alter his decision, and Benjamin submitted, this time with a good grace. Thus they awaited the dawn of Easter. In the tranquil Sabbath eve the few Christians who were detained in Jerusalem, and who were not confined to the house by sickness, assembled once more in the Cenacle, and shortly after midnight, divine worship commenced. After the usual psalms the glorious chapter concerning the Resurrection, the fifteenth of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, was read, also the account the Evangelist Matthew wrote, every word of which Eusebius, as an eye-witness of the scene, was able to corroborate. To bear witness to the Resurrection was the first and principal object the Apostles proposed to themselves in their preaching, for the resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian faith.

Then the holy sacrifice was begun, the neophytes in their white garments being allowed to be present for the first time. When Eusebius had vested, Paulinus brought him the chalice Christ had used at the Last Supper together with wine and unleavened bread. The Priest blessed the oblation and offered it to God. Then followed a sublime prayer of thanksgiving and dedication, which corresponded to the preface now forming a part of the Mass, and after the secret prayers Eusebius spoke the mysterious words of consecration, himself adored the sacred elements kneeling, and then elevated the body and blood of the Lord under the Eucharistic veil for the veneration of the people. More prayers followed, amongst them the Pater noster, which as the summary of all their petitions was recited aloud and offered to the heavenly Father in the name of the Church. The Priest then took the Communion, and dispensed to Paulinus, the four neophytes and to the other brethren and sisters who were present, the body of their risen Lord.

Thamar was overwhelmed with a sense of the excess of the divine love. Sara said nothing, but tears of devotion filled her eyes. The two boys also experienced the sweetness of divine consolations.

At the conclusion of the service, Eusebius invited all, as the members of one family, to partake of a simple

love-feast, the Agapae, which he had provided out of the common funds. The neophytes, now made fully members of the Community, were welcomed and congratulated. Then they all sat down and partook of the humble viands which charity seasoned, in thankfulness of heart, and gladness of spirit also, although apprehension and terror overshadowed the city, like a thundercloud.

On parting many said farewell with a sad conviction that they would not meet again in this valley of tears.

Daylight already flooded the heavens of that Easter morning, when Eusebius, addressing Thamar, asked whether she had sought counsel from her divine Guest, and whether she had decided to go or to remain.

"To remain, if you will allow me," she replied. Then with a charming blush, she added: "You will soon have sick and wounded to care for. Do not count me presumptuous, if I ask to help you. My good will will partly compensate for my want of skill."

"An excellent idea, my daughter," the Priest answered. "Works of mercy are the key that unlocks Heaven's portals, when they are the outcome of supernatural compassion, when, that is, we serve Christ in the person of our suffering brethren. 'As long as ye did it to one of my least brethren, ye did it to me.' I shall certainly avail myself of your assistance. You and Sara will both stay here. Your brother and Paulinus must attempt at once to reach Bethania. From thence Silas will surely be able to point out a way through the desert by which they will be able to journey without encountering the troops marching up from Jericho. Take leave of them now. Paulinus has already said farewell to his mother. Say goodbye and be done."

The leave taking was soon over and Paulinus, encouraged by the blessing of the Priest started on his journey with his companion.

Paulinus had carefully enveloped Veronica's veil, which his mother parted with most reluctantly, in oiled parchment, and concealed it under Benjamin's tunic. He remembered what had taken place at the Fountain Gate, and not unreasonably feared lest the same should occur again. This time he decided to attempt the exit

by way of the Gate of the Essenes. Before the two got up to it, he said to the boy: "Now Benjamin, keep a sharp look out. You know what a precious treasure you have about you, and what its fate would be if it fell into the hands of the Jews. Perhaps they may detain me and search my person. In that case, do you give them the slip, and run as fast as ever you can to Bethania. You will have only to keep to the left going down the valley towards the village of Siloe, and then go upwards through the vale of Hebron to the place where the road to Bethania turns off, just opposite the temple."

"I shall find my way there and to Lazarus' house as well, I shall know it by the garden. Let them try and overtake me, if only I can get a few paces start of them. But what will become of you, if they arrest you?"

"God will see to that," Paulinus answered. "If I possibly can, I will be in Bethania before night, or at any rate early tomorrow morning. If God's will be otherwise, why then you must see how you can get to Pella. We are just at the gate. Try to get through at once, while they are questioning me. Behave as if you did not belong to me."

Benjamin did as he was bidden. He walked a few paces behind Paulinus, and when he was stopped by the sentry, the boy slipped out and got into the open country; for Ben Gioras' men paid little heed to him, while they would not hear of allowing the well-grown young man to pass. Benjamin waiting at a short distance heard how the man told his companion that they had the strictest orders not to permit any pilgrim capable of bearing arms to leave the city. In vain did Paulinus urge the same plea as on a former occasion, that he was the only son of a widow and as such, exempted from military service.

"The Daughter of Sion is now a widow," cried the Captain of the guard. "If you refuse to lend your strong, young arm to defend her against her enemies, you are a dead man, as surely as our God is the Lord of hosts. My orders are not to give an instant's grace."

"Alas!" thought Benjamin, looking compassionately at Paulinus, who had no choice but to resign himself

to his fate. The boy saw that he cast a parting glance in his direction, before he was led away; then he pursued his way sorrowfully down the steep declivity which brought him to the valley of Ben Hinnom.

Benjamin would not have dared to pass by night through this gloomy valley, at that time thickly wooded and regarded as an accursed place, an image of hell. The bodies of criminals who had been executed, the carcasses of dead animals, refuse of all kinds from the city was thrown into this valley. It was there that Judas put an end to his life, and Benjamin remembered many stories that Rhode had told him in which this valley figured as the haunt of evil spirits. However, making the sign of the cross, he pressed onward, and entered the wood of wild cypresses. "Have I not received our Lord this very day, and is not my Guardian Angel at my side? What have I to fear?" he said to himself to keep up his courage, not venturing, however to cast a glance to right or left, but whistling as he went, until at last he reached the village of Siloe without misadventure.

There by the wayside he met with a poor leper, to whom he compassionately gave a good part of the cake of unleavened bread wherewith Sara had provided him. He then asked the way to Bethania.

The beggar warned him not to go thither. "Before nightfall," he said, "it will be full of Romans, a whole legion is coming up from Jericho. They can take nothing from me but my life, and that is of little value to me; but they will rob you of your liberty."

Benjamin was somewhat staggered on hearing this, and for a few minutes he hesitated, alarmed not so much for himself, as on account of the picture confided to his safekeeping. Should he go back to the city, he asked himself. Then he thought he should reach Bethania long before night, besides, the recollection that he had some acquaintances among the Romans emboldened him. Martius the decurion and Lucius the tribune will not let me be sold as a slave, he said, and proceeded fearlessly on his way to Bethania.

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## CHAPTER 41.

### Christian Revenge.

On the following day messengers arrived in Jerusalem from all sides, announcing that the advent of the Romans might be expected in a few hours. Titus had pitched his camp the night before at Gophna, and had already marched as far as Gabaoth-Saul, a village distant from Jerusalem about thirty furlongs.

The trumpets sounded the alarm. On all the squares and principal streets the fighting-men assembled around their leaders; the gates were closed, the towers and battlements were occupied by armed men. A picked body of troops were sent to defend the wall of Agrippa, the outermost and most northerly, where the assault was threatened. Thousands of men took up their station in the open spaces of Bezetha, the new city, to render assistance, or to replace the warriors who lay in wait behind the breastworks. Although a considerable number of the citizens desired, as Josephus asserts<sup>1)</sup> to surrender the city to the Romans for the sake of getting free from the oppression and terrorism exercised by the leaders of factions, yet now, in face of the enemy, no one ventured to express the wish, and by far the greater part were eager to fight in defence of their city and the temple. The principal men vehemently denounced the Romans in the menacing words of the prophets, and thousands of the populace, standing by, cried: "Amen, Amen! May the Lord destroy them as He destroyed Amalek!"

Outside the gate of Judgment, over against the hill of Golgatha, which since the erection of Agrippa's wall formed part of the new city, Bezetha, some hundred men were drawn up in rank and file giving vent to their hatred of the Romans in somewhat similar language. Paulinus was amongst the number, but instead of utter-

<sup>1)</sup> Wars of the Jews, V. 2, 1.

ing curses, he was praying for friend and foe: "Enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; direct our feet into the way of peace."

"What are you muttering to yourself, instead of joining heartily in our commander's prayer?" a fanatical Jew enquired of the young man, who, pale and alarmed, much against his will stood there in military accoutrements.

"Is it not better, my good brothers," he quietly rejoined, "to pray the Lord to enlighten them and admit them into His kingdom?"

"What is it? What is this about!" asked the commanding officer, hastening up to the speakers.

"A wretched traitor in our ranks," exclaimed the Jew, who had begun to belabor the unhappy Paulinus, "a child of Belial, who refuses to curse the Romans!"

"Who actually prays for them!"

"He would give the accursed Gentiles a portion in the kingdom of our God!"

"The miserable fellow is a disciple of the Nazarene, whom our fathers crucified on the place of Calvary, I bet you!"

"No doubt of it! The Nazarite used to say one ought to love one's enemies, though it is written: 'Hate your enemies'."

"Away with him!" "Stone him!" "We want no traitors in our ranks!" "To death with the friend of the Romans!" Such were the confused cries heard on all sides.

With some difficulty the commander obtained a momentary lull, then he called upon Paulinus to curse the Romans.

Pale, but without trembling, Paulinus stood forth, and repeated his words, that it was better to pray for them.

"Then you are really one of the Nazarites!" the Captain roared at him.

"Yes, I am a disciple of Him who prayed for his enemies whilst hanging on His cross yonder," the young man answered unflinchingly. He would have said more, but his voice was drowned in words of fury. The men snatched his arms from him, they tore his clothes off him. In full view of Mount Calvary, rent by the earthquake. Paulinus fell on his knees; he seemed to see

Christ upon the cross, and with extended arms, like Stephen praying for his murderers, he calmly awaited death. And soon stones came flying through the air from all sides, the blood began to trickle down from his shoulders, every limb quivered in agony till at last one missile struck his head, and he fell senseless to the ground upon his face.

"Now like Phinees, we have been zealous for the Lord," exclaimed the Captain. "Forward to the Women's towers!"

The two Women's towers stood on either side of the gate in the northern wall, through which the road led to the sepulchre of the kings and over the hill Scopus to Samaria. By this road Titus' army was advancing. To the west of this gate, in the north-west angle of Agrippa's wall, rose a massive tower, called Psephinus, the remains of which are yet standing, and are known as the tower of Goliath. To this watchtower Eleazar with a chosen band of Zealots, had betaken himself on the first announcement of Titus' approach, for he was eager to be the first to exchange blows with the enemy.

"Let him go!" Ben Gioras said to his followers: "He is pretty certain to get his head broken. And we shall not have lost much, if in this mad sally, the hot-tempered fellow is left on the field."

The sun had well-nigh sunk in the west, but there was as yet no sign of the enemy's approach. Then all of a sudden as its last rays lit up the wide hillside, something was seen to gleam and glitter, and forthwith a dozen watchmen, whose eyes were steadily fixed on the ridge of the mountain, exclaimed in one breath: "There they are! Here they come!"

"By the sword of Gideon!" Eleazar cried, "that is their vanguard. A troop of horsemen; then some foot soldiers, but not carrying lances. They seem to be the sappers and miners. These insolent Romans would hardly venture to pitch their camp under our very walls and almost within reach of our catapults. There is an officer riding to and fro, and pointing out with his sword, it appears to me, the direction the entrenchments are to take."

"If my eyes do not deceive me," said the messenger who had announced the removal of Titus' camp and described the order of march in the council-chamber, "I could swear it is the General himself! I know him by the manner in which he sits his horse."

"And, by the soul of our father Abraham! He is riding with a troop of horsemen down the hillside straight to the city walls, as if he could take it with that handful of men. Now you can see him better; is that really Titus?"

"It is indeed, as surely as I hope for the salvation of Israel," the messenger replied.

"In that case I believe the Lord has given this son of Belial into our hands. Follow me, O my friends! Meanwhile do you remain here and give us a signal as soon as the band of horsemen reach the monument of Queen Helena. There we can attack them in flank, and if I can take him prisoner, the Emperor shall give us our freedom as his son's ransom. Ten talents of gold to whoever shall take Titus alive!"

The Jews were not mistaken, it was Titus himself. Heedless of danger, he had ridden forward, with a few others, a good way in advance of the legions, who encumbered by their baggage and the heavy instruments of war, advanced but slowly along the rough road. Only the sappers and miners, preceded by the company of convicts, the Christians, who were driven on mercilessly by the cruel centurion in charge of them, kept close behind their General.

When Titus reached the summit of the hill, he paused in astonishment, and let his keen glance wander over the scene that lay before him. The massive walls, which on this side formed a three-fold girdle round the city and the temple, the mighty towers by which it was defended, the royal city lying in shadow in the west, and in the east the temple, its white marble walls and gold-plated roofs glittering in the last gleams of the setting sun, extorted from the lips of the cold-blooded Roman, who had seen the Acropolis of Athens and the splendid buildings on the banks of the Tiber an involuntary cry of admiration.



"By Jupiter!" he said to Flavius Josephus, who was riding beside him, "your native city is larger and better fortified than I imagined. You need not tell me where the temple is, though I confess it looks more like a castle than a house of worship. The fortress in the angle over against us with the four solid turrets, must be the tower of Antonia, of which I have heard so often?"

"You are right, most noble Caesar," Josephus answered with an accent of servility. "It is an almost impregnable fortress. Those who hold it command the hill whereon the temple stands, and those who are masters of the temple have the town in their power."

"Very good. I shall take the Antonia tower," Titus answered in a tone of decision. "But first of all we must make a breach in the nearest wall. What is its strength?"

"It is ten cubits wide and twenty-five high;<sup>1)</sup> the battlements and turrets alone are five cubits. It was constructed by Agrippa, the father of the present king, with stones twenty cubits long and ten wide, that could not be displaced by any iron instruments, or shattered by any machine. At intervals of two hundred cubits he erected towers, each twenty cubits square, of solid masonry up to the height of the wall over which they rise to an altitude of twenty cubits. The tower that you see there in the north-west corner is Psephinus, it is much higher than the others, as also are the three colossal towers of the royal city, Hippicus, Phasaelus and Mariamne, which rise up yonder. There are ninety towers in the outer wall, forty in the middle wall, and sixty in the old wall of the city, which on three sides is simply unassailable. It stands on an eminence, surmounting a steep declivity so that it is impossible to bring engines up to the foot of the walls. The whole compass of the city is thirty-three furlongs."<sup>2)</sup>

"It is of no consequence that the city is impregnable on three sides, so long as it is not on the fourth," Titus calmly replied. "And you tell me, this outer wall,

<sup>1)</sup> The Jewish cubit is 1 ft. 9 in. The wall was therefore about 18 ft. wide and 43½ high.

<sup>2)</sup> Wars of the Jews, V. 4. The furlong is 700 ft., thus the circumference was about 4 miles, 660 yards.

which Claudius ought never to have allowed Agrippa to build, is constructed all the way of these enormous blocks of stone?"

"Not entirely, happily for us," Josephus answered. "Agrippa left off building that wall for fear of Claudius; and the last part, between the Women's towers, which protect the nearest gate, as well as the tower Psephinus, were erected more slightly and hastily. Otherwise the wall would have stood the shock of all the engines of war. The Jews have, however, subsequently added to the fortifications at this part of the wall."

"Very well. Then our point of attack will be between the gate and Psephinus tower, if your fellow-countrymen do not open their gates to us of their own accord. You have always asserted that they were weary of the tyranny of their leaders and looked upon us as their deliverers. But here comes our energetic centurion Bilosus Vafer with his gang of workmen. Well done, you have come on famously! How far behind are the legions?"

"The foremost cohort of the twelfth legion is about two miles away, most noble Caesar," the Centurion replied.

"As far off as that? Well, I must not find fault; they have got all the besieging apparatus to drag after them, and I gave express orders that they should march in serried ranks.—Draw up your men in rank and file—So! How out of breath they are, and covered with dust and sweat! Give them a few moments to draw breath, before you set them to work. Then let the camp for the three legions be pitched at once upon the height, the trench dug and the embankment thrown up. The Porta Praetoria shall be here."

"Your orders shall be executed, Caesar. But what do these fools of Christians want with rest? Up with you, cowards, and take your spades. You look like that again, Lucius Flavus, and the lictor shall give you fifty stripes. To work, I say!"

For himself Lucius could bear a great deal, but when he saw how his companions were tormented and maltreated by this cruel officer out of pure malice, his blood boiled, and his countenance betrayed the indignation he

felt. As if to appeal for assistance, he looked up at Titus, his quondam school-fellow, as he walked his horse in front of the convicts. But the proud Roman considered it beneath him even to exchange a word with a man who had chosen a life of ignominy rather than death. The word "coward" fell from his lips, as he passed him by.

While the convicts, exhausted as they were with fatigue, set to work on the entrenchments, the General turned his horse's head in the direction of the city, and declared his intention of reconnoitering a little, in order to inspect the portion of the wall where the assault was to be made. He invited Flavius Josephus to accompany him.

"By the God of my fathers, I mean by Jupiter! I entreat you not to expose your valuable life in so fool-hardy a manner," exclaimed the apostate in terror. "If they perceive you, they will send a shower of arrows on you from the bulwarks, and perhaps bring their slings into play, for they are adepts at that work. And my presence would be no protection to you; on the contrary, they might recognize me, and be all the more enraged—not that I am afraid for myself, I fear the risk for your sacred person—"

"Very well, valiant champion of Jotapata," rejoined Titus scornfully. "Stay here, and spare your tired horse. But your wise advice shall not be unheeded, I will leave in your keeping my general's cloak, and my shining helmet, whereby I might unnecessarily become a mark for the archers."

Titus would not be persuaded to don an ordinary helmet and take a shield; he said he should enjoy the cool evening breeze after his long, hot ride, and away he galloped, armed only with his sword, at the head of his little band of horsemen.

As they drew near, the gleam of arms might be perceived on the walls of the battlements of the towers. The gate itself was hidden from sight by one of the Women's towers, so that it did not come into view until the General and his followers were within bowshot. As long as they advanced straight along the road, shut in

on one side by the wall of rock in which were the tombs of the kings, on the other by garden walls and hedges, all was quiet. But no sooner did Titus, who was riding on ahead, reach the monument of Queen Helena of Adiabene, and proceed in an oblique direction towards the Psephinus tower, thus turning his flank to the city, than a furious shout was heard, and a shower of darts and stones poured down from the battlements. Titus, who with a few men had been over-bold in venturing upon the open ground, intersected with low garden-walls, fences and trenches, saw his mistake, and ordered a retreat. Before however, it was possible for him to regain the road, Eleazar, at the head of a bold and ever increasing multitude, rushed out of the gate and intercepted the horsemen.<sup>1)</sup> The principal part of the escort, that had not yet turned off on to the broken ground, unaware of the danger in which their leader was, turned round, and galloped away towards Scopus.

"Victory is ours!" exclaimed Eleazar, endeavoring to surround the little band and force them onward in the direction of the city. "Ten gold talents from the temple treasury to any one who takes that fair-haired horseman prisoner. He is the Emperor's son!"

"Take him, seize him! The Lord of Hosts is with us!" cried the multitude, and hundreds flung themselves between the few men who were with Titus and the fast-flying escort, this effectually cutting off his retreat.

"He cannot escape us! The Lord has delivered him into my hand. Press on him more closely; do not let him make his way out on the west. Drive them up to the walls. But spare his life, it is the price of our freedom." Thus Eleazar urged on the crowd of Jews who were pressing upon the General in an ever-narrowing circle.

"Lay down your arms, O Caesar!" he exclaimed in exultation. But Titus knitted his brows and murmured under his breath: "Death before dishonor." Then turning calmly to his followers, who had come up close to him, he said: "We must cut our way through them, whatever it may cost. Follow me!"

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, *loc. cit.* V. 2, 2.

So saying he thrust his spurs into his charger's sides, so that it reared and at one leap cleared the garden wall, and alighted in the midst of the Jews. Several were knocked down and trampled to death by the horse's hoofs, more still were cut down by Titus' sword. The other horsemen bravely followed their leader's example, but their horses were tired, and not all could clear the wall. Meanwhile arrows and javelins and stones came flying through the air; many a man's horse was wounded, and fell under him, or stumbled in the trenches cut in the ground, and his rider was slain by the Jews. Thus the little band around the General grew gradually weaker, and no feats of daring on Titus' part enabled him to force his way out, for the enemy kept coming up in great numbers to help.

The case seemed hopeless, but Titus, with the cool courage of a Roman, who believed in an unalterable destiny, would not give in. Then suddenly some of the escort, who had at length perceived that their commander was left behind, appeared on the scene, but owing to the broken nature of the ground, they could not effect much. A few Jewish soldiers kept them off with their lances, while a storm of missiles fell around them. Titus saw this, and gave himself up for lost. "Cavalry can do nothing in this accursed country," he said to himself. "Would that but one of my cohorts were here! But I fear they will come too late."

As he spoke he heard a shout on the left, a quick word of command in Latin, and the noise of fighting. His first thought was that it might be the vanguard of the legion coming up through Emmaus, on the west; but the next moment he saw that it was the band of convicts, who without sword or shield, armed only with their mattocks, had flung themselves on the Jews, attacking them in flank, at their weakest point, the greater number having gone to the right to encounter the horsemen coming up on that side. Titus breathed more freely; he made a sign to his followers, whose numbers were by this time sadly diminished, to force a way out to the left. But Eleazar had already perceived that he was in danger of losing the prize of which he fancied

himself secure; he called loudly on his followers for assistance. The conflict became furious. Darts hustled through the air, killing and wounding dozens of the Christians at their first onslaught, as they were wholly unprotected against them. Heedless of this, led by Lucius, they valiantly mingled with the crowd, and a hand-to-hand combat ensued. The iron implements, wielded by vigorous arms, cleft a path through the enemy, and the little band of pioneers had almost reached their General. Blows resounded on all sides, mingled with the shouts of the combatants and the groans of the dying.

Meanwhile Eleazar had forced his way up to Titus on the other side. In a voice quivering with rage, he cried: "Kill him, if we cannot take him alive!" But many as were the darts aimed at the General, none of them touched him, as bare-headed, pale and undaunted, he defended himself with his sword. At length Eleazar, who was close to him, hurled a javelin at him; at the same moment his charger gave a bound, the weapon struck the horse instead of his rider, and both fell to the ground. Before Titus could regain his feet, Eleazar seized him by the arm, shrieking: "Death or surrender!" The next instant the Jew sank helpless upon his prostrate foe, his shoulder cleft by a well-timed blow dealt by Lucius.

This blow saved Titus' life, and the tide of battle turned. The blast of war-trumpets was heard from the heights of Scopus, and the first cohorts of the twelfth legion were seen rapidly descending the slope in serried ranks. The Jews hastily retreated to the city gate.

Lucius helped his General to rise. Titus stared in astonishment at his former companion, whom but a short time ago he had treated so contemptuously.

"Lucius Flavus," he said, "I owe my life to you and your comrades. This is not a Roman's vengeance."

Lucius eyes sparkled. "No, it is a Christian's revenge," he rejoined.

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## CHAPTER 42.

### In the General's Tent.

Titus with the remainder of his followers now rode on to meet the cohorts who had come up; the men gathered round their leader rejoicing in his rescue. "You would have had to sing a dirge instead of a paean," remarked Titus gravely, "had it not been for these brave trench-diggers. Now collect the wounded, and convey them carefully to the camp. And let every consideration be shown to the enemy, they fought bravely. They must not be molested when they are carrying their dead and wounded to the city."

The three legions had by this time also come up, and were making their camp on the summit and sides of the hill Scopus, the Roman custom being to make a wall round their encampment before nightfall, all the soldiers joining in the work. Titus, after the tribunes had in turn saluted him and congratulated him on his escape, withdrew to his own tent. Scarcely touching the meal prepared for him, for a long time he paced up and down, deep in thought. At length he threw the *sagum*, a common soldier's mantle of common cloth, round his shoulders, called to the officer who did duty as his adjutant, and walked slowly down the long streets, into which the camp was divided, where the soldiers, separated into companies, were resting in their tents. He inspected the sentries at their different posts, in order to convince himself that all was in good order. Eleazar's daring sally had led him to suspect that the Jews might attack their provisional camp during the night. All however, appeared in security. The Easter moon, now almost full, stood high in the heavens, and in the great city outspread before his eyes profound silence reigned, as in a city of the dead.

"Am I really chosen by destiny to destroy this city and this nation, as Scipio destroyed Carthage?" he asked himself. "It almost seems so, otherwise the

Fates would have cut my thread today. Better for me perhaps if they had, than that I should be cursed by the lips of millions, for that is invariably the lot of one who overthrows a nation. But what does that matter? If only Rome's sovereignty is thereby increased and extended, and my name is handed down to posterity among the famous generals of the world's history! May it be so written in the heavens!"

Whilst thus reflecting, Titus had reached the *Decumana* gate where the Captain of the guard informed him that the legion which took the road through Emmaus was approaching. In the stillness of the night the tramp of the advancing soldiery was distinctly audible. "Let them pitch their camp three stadii (furlongs) from here," was Titus' command. And while he stood gazing into the darkness and listening for every sound, a horseman rode up, announcing that the legion under Placidus had reached the mountain to the east of Jerusalem. Titus gave orders that they should encamp there, and said that the lieutenants and tribunes of the legions that had recently come up were to present themselves on the morrow in his tent. He then enquired where the company under the command of Bilosus Vafer was encamped, and on the spot being pointed out to him, turned his steps in that direction.

Bilosus Vafer had tossed uneasily on his couch that night; for the consciousness that he had not himself led the company of convicts under his charge to the rescue of the General, drove him almost to despair. Like most men who are bullies, he was somewhat of a coward. Thus it came to pass that when from the height of Scopus the sortie made by the Jews was observed, the idea of hastening to the aid of the horsemen did not occur to him, and not until the news came that Titus was himself in danger, did he bestir himself at all. Then he only ran to and fro irresolutely, declaring he could not engage in battle with his unarmed and cowardly gang of Christians. Lucius did not long hesitate as to his course of action. Crying aloud: "Follow me, a spade is as good as a sword," he rushed down the hill at the head of his comrades, leaving the Centurion to curse and swear as he list.



It may be imagined that the said Centurion did not feel his conscience quite at ease when he entered the presence of the General.

"How was it that I looked in vain for you at the head of your brave band?" Titus asked coldly.

"I thought the first cohort was coming up, and I meant to join that and go to your succor, because the sappers and miners were unarmed," the Centurion stammered out.

"Yet you sent them to my assistance?"

"No, that is not exactly, that man Lucius, who is always putting himself forward — he cannot forget that he held rank as a tribune — actually took upon himself to give the order. It was a grave misdemeanor, a breach of military discipline, and we must make a signal example of him."

"It was as I thought," Titus answered, with a scornful glance at the Centurion. Then he went on: "It certainly requires as much valor to torment a lot of willing men almost to death, as without sword or shield to risk one's life for one's leader in the trenches. Which is the tent where Lucius Flavus is? That one? Very well. You can go now, Bilosus Vafer. We will consider who deserves to have a signal example made of him."

So saying Titus turned away and went into the tent indicated. It was full of wounded men. He saw Lucius, a lamp in his hand, going from one to another, laying cool bandages on their wounds, and administering to them what consolation he could. He was bending over two who appeared to be dying, when Titus entered the tent. Lucius' back was towards him, and the General heard him say to the men: "Courage, brothers! The crown of eternal glory will soon be yours. You have kept the faith and lost your life in fulfilling your duty. Make an act of love to Him who so loved us that He gave His only-begotten Son to suffer the death of the Cross for us, and then depart in peace."

Titus did not understand these words, though they were said in the most correct Latin, but he suspected that they contained some teaching peculiar to Christianity, and comprehended the allusion to eternal felicity

as the reward of death in the discharge of duty. He was rather pleased with what he heard. He was pleased still more by the charity Lucius showed to his comrades, fatigued as he must necessarily be with the long march and subsequent skirmish. He waited a minute, then left the tent without a word, for he perceived that he had not been recognized.

When the bugle sounded the next morning, the soldiers assembled round their several centurions as was customary in the Roman camp. As many of the convicts as were not too severely wounded to leave their tents, did the same, and ranged themselves before Bilius Vafer's tent. The Centurion was by no means amiably disposed that day, yet he hardly dared to vent his ill-humor on the men under his command. After finding fault wherever he could with their habiliments and their implements, he called Lucius Flavus to the front, and addressed him thus:

"Having been an officer, though you were degraded on account of your low opinions and other delinquencies, you ought to know what a grave fault you were guilty of yesterday by your grievous breach of military discipline. You are none the less to blame because your mad freak turned out successfully. Besides, the General would have been rescued directly by me and the cohort that was coming up, without all the casualties which are now to be laid at your door. Here on my list I have twenty-one killed and thirty-five wounded out of my centuria, and all these would be active and sound of limb, had you not without my orders, contrary to my orders, presumed to lead them into the fray, for which may the furies torment you! They were, it is true, nothing more than wretched Christians, that will perhaps make you appear less culpable in Titus' eyes. Perchance in his inborn kindness of heart, he may let you off this time. But be sure I shall not forget this little episode, and I shall make you repent of it, as is my bounden duty. Decurion, for a whole month Lucius Flavus is to be put on half rations on account of insubordination. And woe betide you if you set yourself against me another time! *Et caetera.*"

The rolling *r* of the last word, which the Centurion was wont to accentuate in a special manner when he was in a particularly bad temper, had hardly died away, when an officer came up to conduct Bilosus Vafer and the convict Lucius Flavus to the Praetorium.

This summons sounded rather suspicious to the Centurion. He changed color, but instantly went with the officer, bidding the decurion follow with the convict who was also summoned to appear before the General.

Titus' tent was in the centre of the camp, opposite to the principal entrance in the ramparts enclosing it. Between the gateway and the tent was a large open space, three sides of which were occupied each by one cohort of the twelfth legion. The fourth side in front of the tent was appropriated to the Lifeguards, and immediately before the tent stood a considerable number of lictors with their *fascēs*, the bundle of rods and the axe, to indicate that the General was the highest arbitrator of life and death in the camp. Besides this, since the calends of January, Titus had been nominated Consul by the Roman Senate in conjunction with his father. Opposite the entrance to the tent the standards of the several legions and the silver eagle were planted.

When Bilosus and Lucius reached the General's tent, there was a great deal going on there. It was just the time at which the tribunes brought the reports of their centurions to the Commander-in-chief, and besides this, the lieutenants Cerealis, Placidus and Alexander Tiberius had come in to offer their felicitations to the new Consul. With these and the most distinguished of the tribunes Titus was now holding a council of war.

A considerable time elapsed before the tent door opened, and the General with the officers of his staff came out, and took his place upon a platform raised a few feet from the ground, and sheltered by a canopy of purple cloth. The lieutenants stationed themselves to the right and left of his chair, the tribunes stood on the steps on either side, the lictors formed the background and the ranks of the cohorts were the spectators.

Titus looked round him, and inquired: "Where is the centuria of convicts? I only see their Centurion

here and one of their number. Let them all be brought here, every man of them, even the wounded, provided that it will do them no harm. It is my will that they should all stand before my tribunal."

A few minutes later the whole band of Christian convicts were marshalled in rank and file before Titus. In a few, forcible sentences he related their heroic conduct to the soldiers. "Your General owes his life to them and to the protection of the gods. Without breastplate, without shield, without helmet, without so much as a sword in their hands, they dashed into the ranks of the enemy at a juncture when I already had given myself up for lost, and at the cost of their own lives they rescued me by their valor. Rome never allows such virtue to go unrewarded. Officers and Privates! You know that these brave men who risked their lives for me in the trenches, were punished on account of their religious tenets. I now cancel their sentence; I herewith restore them to the privileges and rights of Roman soldiers, of which they are as deserving as the best and most valiant amongst you. No one is ever to taunt them with the chastisement inflicted on them, or the reason of that chastisement. Over and above this, my paymaster will hand over to every one of them a thousand *sestertii* (a sum equivalent to about eight guineas) as an acknowledgment of their noble act. That is my decision."

A burst of applause from the soldiery followed this speech of their beloved chief. When quiet was restored, Titus called Lucius Flavus to him and told him to stand beside him. Then once more addressing his audience, he said: "The tribute of praise which I gave to all of those valiant men, is due to a still greater extent to the courage of their leader. And in addition to his valor, he displayed rare magnanimity in saving my life, oblivious of an insult he had received. Lucius Flavus, I restore you to your former rank as tribune, and it is my wish that you should occupy the same tent as myself."

Again the shouts of the delighted soldiers rent the air, while the officers who stood by congratulated their new comrade. Lucius returned thanks to each and all,

to the General of course in the first place. Titus, lowering his voice, said to him: "I will promise you one thing more, Lucius; if ever I fill the imperial throne, I will not persecute a single Christian on account of his religion, after what I saw of you and your fellow-religionists, both last evening and in the night."

Lucius' eyes brightened; in his heart he said: "Thanks be to God. For such a reward as this I count as nothing all that I have had to suffer."

Titus spoke again, and in a loud voice: "There is yet another case to be judged. Step forward, Centurion Bilosus Vafer!"

With an unpleasant foreboding of what was to follow, the Centurion stepped on to the platform where he could be seen by all, with a very crestfallen countenance.

With scathing sarcasm Titus depicted the Centurion's conduct. "He had a stout coat of mail, a splendid helmet and a trusty Roman sword, but instead of putting himself at the head of his weaponless and defenceless company, who saved my life, he preferred to look on at the fray from a safe distance. Nay more, he endeavored by the orders he issued to restrain the brave fellows from attempting the exploit, and afterwards branded their heroic achievement as a criminal act. What think you, does such a craven coward deserve any longer to be a centurion in the Roman army? He merits a sound castigation. Unloose your rods, lictor, and chastise him thoroughly. Go, I will tolerate you in the camp no longer, you can join the commissariat, who are bringing up corn from Caesarea. You will perhaps do for a mule-driver."

This speech evoked cheers and peals of laughter from the soldiery, by whom the Centurion was cordially hated. Lucius interceded for him, but in vain; the Commander abode by his decision.

The Christians were now armed and placed again under their former officers, some being made decurions. Lucius accompanied the General into the interior of the tent, which was divided into several compartments, one of which was allotted to him. Titus gave him some of

his own apparel and a magnificent suit of armor and accoutrements, so that he could take his place as an equal among the other officers.

"I never thought these honors would fall to my lot again," Lucius said to himself, as he put on the armor and strapped the sword to his side. "Since God has so ordained, may He grant that it be not to my injury, but to His glory." And forthwith he determined to make use of his position near the person of the future Emperor, and to a certain extent as his friend, to promote the triumph of the Christian religion.

"The promise he made me is in itself a great boon; but what would it be if the Caesar himself could be won for Christ! If I could purchase that by my death, I should consider it cheaply bought."

The first thing Lucius did, after returning thanks to the General, was to visit the wounded, who having heard of Titus' judgment, were overjoyed at the tidings. "Thus earthly troubles pass," the Tribune said to them, "and their bitter seed produces the sweet fruit of salvation. The period during which our Faith has been oppressed and persecuted will come to an end, sooner perhaps than we think for. And then how rich the blessings which the fruit of suffering will bring to the whole world!"

This happy result was not so near as Lucius in his joy and elation imagined.

As he quitted the tent where the wounded lay, the decurion Martius met him, and beaming with delight, congratulated him heartily. "Now you see," he said, "Quartus Querulus is not as impotent as you think him, his charm has worked at last! Who would have thought you would again stand high in the Consul's favor, and enjoy such honors."

Lucius replied: "My good Martius, the spell of your haruspex would have profited little, if my Christian brethren had not rescued Titus by their loyalty and courage. Yet I rejoice in the happy turn affairs have taken, the more so because I may now have an opportunity of requiting your faithful affection."

Another pleasant surprise awarded Lucius that day.

Towards evening, he was returning to the tent with Titus, who had marked the place where the assault on the walls was to be made, and given orders concerning the fortification of the camp and the erection of the earthworks, when one of Placidus' troopers came riding over from the camp of the tenth legion on Mount Olivet, with a boy on his horse before him.

"Placidus the legate salutes you, noble Caesar, and sends you this boy, whom our soldiers found in a village hard by. Placidus thinks he is a runaway slave, belonging to your royal friend, Queen Berenice. You will please be careful what you do with him. He is a sharp youngster, who might perhaps be made use of as a spy; Placidus is of opinion that it was in that capacity that the Jews sent him out of the city."

So saying, the trooper set Benjamin on the ground before Titus, who instantly exclaimed: "By Hercules, it is Berenice's little Eros!"

"My name is not Eros and I will not be called Eros," Benjamin answered, tossing his curly head angrily. "That is the name of one of your many hundred deities, and of a wicked one too, so I am told. And because Berenice called me by that name, and dressed me up as she did, I threw down her silver quiver with the gold arrows and the bow and ran away. I am not her slave but the son of Rabbi Sadoc. My name is not Eros, but Benjamin Ben Sadoc!"

The boy spoke out so boldly and with such unaffected indignation that the General, who in Caesarea had regarded him merely as one of Berenice's playthings, a pet slave, was rather pleased with the little lad. But he answered gravely: "You speak very irreverently of our gods, take care, or they will punish you. In fact you deserve they should. And how will you prove that you are not one of Berenice's slaves? I saw you among them. You know that runaway slaves are either scourged or crucified."

Benjamin's eyes flashed. "I would rather be crucified, as our Saviour was, than go back to Berenice, and be her Eros. If you want to know whether I am one of her slaves, ask the decurion Martius, or the centurion Lucius, he is a friend of mine."

"Do you mean Lucius Flavus?" the General asked.

"Yes that is the name of my friend. He has light hair just like you, only his eyes are blue. And he is rather taller and handsomer than you are."

Titus laughed and said: "I do not think any further proof is needed, for by the immortals, no slave dare use his tongue so freely. But the witness you mention is close by, and as you say he is your friend we will have him called."

Lucius came directly, and as soon as the boy caught sight of him he ran up to his old acquaintance with delight. Titus turned into his tent and left them together. Lucius took the child out of the camp and sat down with him on a large stone at a little distance from the soldiers who were building the wall of circumvallation round the camp; thence they had a view of the valley of Josaphat and the holy city. Benjamin recounted all his adventures since the day when Lucius left the port of Caesarea.

"So your sister is still alive and is in Jerusalem!" the Tribune exclaimed, and he asked a number of questions about Thamar, to whom his thoughts had often turned with longing during the bitter season of tribulation.

"Of course she is still alive!" Benjamin said, wondering why Lucius questioned him so much and so eagerly. "Why should she not be? She is young and strong. Do you see those white doves flying over the roofs of the houses to the left of the king's palace? That is where she is living. All the time I was there I looked after the doves, as I told you. I only hope Nathaniel will take care that the nasty cat does not get at the young ones!"

Then Benjamin proceeded to relate how he and Thamar received baptism and Holy Communion.

"You happy child! People are not usually admitted to the holy mysteries so soon," Lucius said.

"That is what Eusebius told us. But he said we were encompassed by so many dangers now that he relaxed the rule in my favor and Nathaniel's. Thank God for it. But for that, I really do not think I could



have escaped as well as I did yesterday. Just hear what perils I had to encounter."

Benjamin then told how Paulinus was detained at the city gate and how he got to Bethania. "I knew the house and the garden directly," he said, "from Thamar's description. But do you think old Silas let me in?" Not a bit of it. I knocked till my hands were sore and called till I was hoarse. At last, crying with vexation, I was going on my way to Jericho, as I should have done if I had not had the veil with the Lord's image on it about me, and Eusebius told me to take such great care of it. The warning the leper gave me made me hesitate. I said a prayer to my Guardian Angel, and began to hammer at the door and call out afresh. Then all at once a man came up behind me and said very crossly was I going to bring the Romans who were already entering the village down on him by the uproar I made?

"I asked if he was Silas, and he nodded. Then I said if he had come sooner I should not have made so much noise. And if the Romans were there, he must let me in at once, that Veronica's veil might be safely hidden before they came to the house. At first he stared at me, but when he understood at last what a treasure I had in my keeping, he took me by the hand and led me behind the hedges to the end of the garden, where there was a cave. He dragged me in there and closed the opening with a great stone so that only a little light came in through a crevice. I was frightened at first, but when Silas told me that was the cave where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, I did not mind. I gave Silas the picture, and he kissed it, and showed me another picture of the Mother of Our Lord; then he wrapped them both up in the parchment and showed me the place where he deposited them. He invited me to stay in the cave with him, as he had a good store of provisions; he said he intended to remain there until the Romans had left the neighborhood. You can fancy that was too wearisome to suit me. So I asked Silas this morning to give me a good breakfast, as I was going through Jericho to Pella, to join my father. He made

me promise most solemnly not to reveal his place of hiding to the Romans, and then let me out, closing the cave behind me.

"There was a fine row in the house, it was full of Romans, and when I wanted to pass out of the garden into the road, a sentry seized me and took me over Mount Olivet to Placidus' camp. Placidus said I was Berenice's slave, and sent me to Titus, and I might have fared ill, if you had not been here, good Lucius. But look, the sun has set, and Paulina's white doves have gone to roost."

"Then it is time for us to go back to the tent. I will ask Titus to let me keep you with me till some opportunity presents itself to send you to Pella. You will not mind making yourself useful in the General's tent?"

"Not at all, only he must not call me Eros, but Benjamin."

They returned to the camp, and Titus acquiesced in Lucius' proposal.

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## CHAPTER 43.

### In the Hospital.

There was an intense excitement in the city when Eleazar made the sally and engaged in conflict with Titus' troopers. Shouts were heard in the streets: "He has taken the Roman General prisoner! He is bringing the Emperor's son into the city! Take your timbrels, Daughters of Sion, and go to meet the conqueror with music and dancing."

The premature rejoicing was soon changed into lamentation, and when night fell, many dead and wounded men were carried in from the scene of combat. Torches were held to their pale countenances and the name of each called aloud, to enable their friends to come forward and remove them, the wounded to be tended, the dead to be interred.

Eleazar's name was one of those thus proclaimed, but no one presented himself to take charge of him. His followers, after their defeat, had retreated in all haste to the temple, to escape the mockery of Ben Gioras' adherents, who from the walls had been spectators of the conflict in which they took no part. Eleazar's wife in her secluded dwelling knew nothing of the fight; in fact she had for many years led a life of such seclusion, that few of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were even aware of her existence.

Hence it came to pass that no one offered to undertake the care of him. "Lay him along of the others," said the officer in command of the guard, once more holding the torch to his features, distorted by the agony he endured. "The head-strong fellow has done for himself now. He seems half way to another world. Is there no one here who understands something of surgery! It strikes me his end is fast approaching."

A venerable old man made his way through the crowd and stepping into the light of the torches said: "Hand him over to me. I will see what with the blessing of the Lord can be done for him. I am Eusebius the physician, and I live close to the old palace, which with the assistance of a few charitable souls I have arranged as a hospital for the wounded who have no friends to nurse them. I am willing to receive all the other wounded who have no other aid. Only let me put a temporary bandage on their wounds before they are moved, then carry them over to the old palace."

"May the Lord bless your kind heart and helping hand," answered the Captain, a gruff warrior, touched at this generous offer. "I should not have thought such charity was to be found in Israel, since the days of our forefathers. We will gladly give you every assistance here, and then carry the poor fellows to your house. Only I am afraid our rough hands are more fitted to deal blows than to heal them."

"I only want some cold water and a light. I have brought linen with me," Eusebius rejoined, setting to work at once.

He knelt down beside Eleazar, and assisted by one of the bystanders unfastened his coat of mail. "Alas!" he said to himself, "the muscles are lacerated, the collar-bone fractured, perhaps the socket of the arm and shoulder-blade are splintered! If we save the man's life, he will be maimed for the rest of his days." He then beckoned to a closely-veiled woman, who had accompanied him, carrying a basket containing strips of linen and different instruments. Instructed by him she commenced washing the frightful wound with a soft sponge, and then applied healing herbs and a compress of wet linen, which were kept in their place by bandages. Tenderly as she handled the hurt, every touch of the broken bone occasioned terrible pain. Eleazar recovered consciousness, and ground his teeth with fury, cursing himself and cursing the Roman who had snatched from him the prey already in his grasp. "If there is one devil incarnate, it is that Centurion Lucius. May the Lord only deliver him into my hands." Such

were the half-inaudible words he muttered; the woman who was bending over him, started involuntarily at the name of Lucius.

"Keep calm, my friend," Eusebius said. "If you heat your blood by your anger, it will be your death."

The Priest then went to attend to the other sufferers who required his services. They were all more passive in his hands than their passionate leader. The majority were sadly hurt. The trampling of the horses' hoofs, sharp thrusts from Roman swords, stout blows from spade and mattock had occasioned many a gaping wound and fractured many a limb. The closely-veiled woman, whose fingers trembled at first at touching a wound, soon gained skill and confidence, and was able to carry out the physician's directions unaided.

Shortly before midnight all the wounds were dressed, and the sufferers being laid on stretchers, the mournful procession wended its way in the moonlight to the Upper town. Sabbas had come down with Nathaniel to say that all was ready for their reception. At the same time they brought the information to Eusebius that one of the brethren was reported to be stoned to death near the hill of Golgatha immediately before the conflict took place, because he refused to curse the Romans. On hearing this Eusebius told Nathaniel to show the bearers the way to the Cenacle, and made a sign to Thamar—for she was his veiled assistance—to accompany them, while he remained behind with Sabbas.

"We must examine the ground in the vicinity of Golgatha, to see if we can discover any traces of such a deed," he said. Leaving the others, who turned off in the direction of the Gate of Judgment hard by, the Priest and his companion took their way to Mount Calvary, which stood out clearly before them in the bright light of the Paschal moon.

They had not long to search, for not many paces from the road they found the body of the victim, lying on his face, his arms extended wide, and apparently lifeless.

Eusebius was deeply touched. "That is just how I saw Stephen lying," he said. "This dear brother now

wears the crown of martyrdom and rejoices with him. Let us carry his remains, for which a glorious resurrection is in store, with all reverence to the house, and prepare it with spices for the burial, as we did that of Stephen."

When Eusebius, kneeling beside the body, touched it reverently with his lips, he uttered an exclamation of surprise. "Strange to say, it does not feel cold! Yet you say he was stoned before the fight begun? Then he cannot be dead. Lift him up carefully, that I may examine him more closely."

Between them they turned the inanimate body on to its back, and Sabbas by the Priest's orders raised the head and shoulders, supporting them in his arms. As soon as the moonlight fell on the ashy features, they simultaneously ejaculated: "Paulinus!"

"He is not dead, his heart still beats. The stone which struck his head so violently just here rendered him unconscious; the others that bruised his chest and shoulders may not have done as much harm. Are you strong enough to carry the youth home, Sabbas?"

"I can carry him easily," the sturdy porter replied. "But I do not know—somehow it seems almost wrong to rob him of his crown. I should not feel very grateful to you under similar circumstances, if you were, so to speak, to drag me back from the very door of Heaven and bring me to life again."

"It is incumbent on us to do our utmost to preserve the flickering flame of life from extinction," the Priest replied. "The Lord in His mercy will not allow him to lose the crown he has won, it will be laid up for him in Heaven, and he will one day wear it adorned with fresh jewels."

Thereupon Sabbas took Paulinus in his arms; the Priest walking close beside him to support the injured head, which he had temporarily bandaged with a strip off his own garments.

"We bring another of the wounded," he said to the guard, who grumbled at having to unfasten the gate. They then proceeded in silence through the moonlit streets to the Cenacle in the Upper town.

Everything connected with divine worship had been removed from the room where the Last Supper was held to the crypt below. Thamar, with the help of Sara and Rhode, had arranged on each side a row of mattresses and pillows on which the wounded were laid. It so happened that Paulinus was put next Eleazar. Eusebius thought it wiser not to take the young man to his mother's house, as he was very doubtful about his recovery.

With Thamar's help he washed the gaping wound on his head and instructed her as to the best means of keeping it cool. It was not necessary to bid her lavish special care on this patient; her personal acquaintance with him, and the sacredness of the cause for which he had suffered, gave him a peculiar claim on her. "He is a martyr," she said, enthusiastically, as she seated herself between the two sufferers, ready to devote her attention to them both equally during the watches of the night.

Towards morning Eleazar awoke from his stupor. On becoming aware of his condition, he burst into a rage. Everything tended to aggravate him; the torturing pain of his wound, the knowledge of his defeat, which he attributed to the treachery of Ben Gioras in not coming with all his forces to his aid; the disloyalty of his adherents in not conveying him with them up to the temple; finally the fact that he, the leader and commander, should be taken with the common soldiers to an unknown house. Beside himself with anger, he cursed himself and all his surroundings and finally abused his wife, whose place it was to nurse him, for leaving him to the mercy of absolute strangers.

Thamar did her best to soothe and pacify him. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for having so little self-control. Probably Rachel knows nothing about your misfortune. I will inform her of it, and then you shall, if you wish it, be removed to your own house, although the physician cannot do as much for you there as here, where you will be well cared for."

While Thamar was speaking Eleazar listened attentively. Where had he heard that gentle, melodious

voice before? In the dimly-lighted apartment he had not recognized his nurse, and now the sound of her voice, though familiar to his ear, awoke no definite memories. In the confused state of his brain, he thought at first it was his sick sister Ruth, who used sometimes to exhort him to have patience and was accustomed to defend Rachel. He became calmer, and as his head grew clearer, he remembered that Ruth was dead. Suddenly there flashed across his mind the name Thamar.

He opened his eyes wide, and attempted to sit up, but the quick movement caused him such exquisite pain, that he fell back on his pillow with a half-suppressed groan. He devoured with his eyes the slender figure now bending over Paulinus and applying cool bandages to his head. "Thamar!" he murmured softly. And he taxed his aching head to evoke reminiscences now half-effaced. How long was it since he last saw her? He knew now, four years ago when the king's palace was burnt down, she escaped from the temple in some way that was never explained, and on that same night the Centurion whom he hated so bitterly disappeared out of the prison. How he had searched and hunted for her then, and all in vain. At last he had come to the conclusion that she had gone away with the Centurion, and had accordingly heaped imprecations upon her. Now he saw that it was not as he thought. And the Centurion Lucius, had he not seen him in the battle before the city gate? Yes, he remembered it perfectly well, and it was his hand that dealt the blow, gave him the wound that was now torturing him. Again an ungovernable fury seized upon him.

At any rate, however, the Roman had not taken Thamar from him. His former passion for Rabbi Sadoc's beautiful and wealthy daughter awoke within his breast in full force. She was fairer then ever; the bud then scarce unfolded, had in the course of those four years blossomed out into a lovely flower. How charming she looked as she went from bed to bed; how soft was the light that gleamed in her beauteous eyes, how compassionate the expression of her rosy lips as she



stooped over his neighbor, bathing his wound! He himself was the only one she seemed to avoid. And now, when Paulinus opened his eyes for the first time, a slight groan escaping him, how she hastened to him, whispering kind words in his ear. See, a faint smile passes over the sick man's countenance; there can be no mistake, they are friends and lovers. Then, to finish his exasperation, Eleazar distinctly heard her softly call him: Paulinus, dear Paulinus! Again the unhappy Eleazar was consumed with jealousy.

From that time forth he watched every look and tried to catch every word that was exchanged between Thamar and Paulinus. The pure, supernatural love that Thamar felt for the Confessor of Christ, a love he could not conceive or understand, was like a poison in his veins. At first he intended to tell Thamar that he recognized her, and that he still counted upon winning her hand. But when he had taken up the erroneous idea that the maiden whom he still called his affianced bride, and this unknown youth were attached to each other, he closed his eyes whenever she came to his side, and refused to speak to her, so that she imagined that the Captain of the Temple had fortunately failed to recognize her.

In her heart Thamar gave thanks to God for this supposed ignorance on her patient's part; she only went to him when his wound required attention, and forbore to speak an unnecessary word to him. At break of day Sara took her place; and later on she contrived to have Eleazar moved to another bed, where she would not have to go near him as often. All this only seemed to increase his jealous passion. From the corner where he lay he silently watched her every movement, noting every time she exchanged a word with Paulinus, and in his heart he concocted schemes of revenge whereof Thamar had not the slightest suspicion.

The places in the Cenacle rendered vacant by the death of the patients, were quickly filled up; for every day fighting went on before the gates. In order to carry the works up to the walls of the city Titus caused the intervening space to be levelled, the hedges being cut

down and the walls overthrown. He himself pitched his camp with a company of select troops over against the Psephinus tower, while Tiberius Alexander took up a fortified position where the other wall joined the Hippicus tower. The bulk of his forces were spread out in seven ranks in full view of the city, in the hope that the sight of the much-feared legions would induce the Jews to surrender. But Ben Gioras only responded by repeated sallies, and he succeeded in giving many a check to the Romans, though he received frequent defeats in return.<sup>1)</sup>

Thus it was that fresh importations of wounded men arrived daily and the Coenaculum was over-crowded. All who were sufficiently restored to be moved elsewhere were dismissed. Eusebius asked Eleazar in the kindest manner whether he would not like to be taken to his own house, which was close by, and let Rachel nurse him. Owing to his strong constitution his wound, contrary to Eusebius' anticipation, was so far healed that his life was no longer in jeopardy. If he held his left arm perfectly still in a sling, he would be able to use it again in about a month's time, so the priest and physician told him, when he took a friendly leave of him, inviting him to come over to him every day to have his arm dressed.

"That will not be necessary; Rachel can do everything for me," Eleazar replied with a sinister, almost defiant look. Then he went away without a single word of thanks, casting an evil glance at Thamar, who happened to be standing beside Paulinus at that moment.

The injury the young Levite had received still gave grave cause for apprehension, yet Eusebius judged it better that he should be taken to his mother's house, since absolute quiet was necessary for his shattered nerves. He had accordingly just asked Sabbas to carry his patient the short distance to the House of Mary. Thamar and Sara, who had wrapped his head up carefully, accompanied him. Thinking only of Paulinus, they did not observe that Eleazar went the same way

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<sup>1)</sup> Ibid. V. 3, 3.

they did; but he took note of the lowly dwelling and the garden door which closed behind the unwitting object of his jealous anger.

"Plague on it," he muttered to himself, "that my arm prevents me from doing anything. Otherwise I would rout out that nest this very day. I shall remember it. So farewell, my sweet dove, we shall meet again at no very distant time, I hope."

Eleazar proceeded to his own home, and greeted his wife with a torrent of cruel reproaches. This time, he said, he was quite determined to take out the bill of divorce, for never did a Jewish wife deserve it more thoroughly. In vain Rachel assured him that she had not the slightest idea that he was wounded that night, in fact she knew nothing of the battle, and as soon as Nathaniel informed her the next morning of his misfortune, she had hastened to the hospital to nurse him. She reminded him that he himself had rejected her services very curtly and put her to shame before the other women; and as often as she had presented herself there she had been turned away. She declared that she was most willing to nurse him now, only she implored him to be just to her; and at once she set about arranging his bed, and doing everything she thought he would like. Her patient and devoted affection at last wrung from the sufferer, embittered as he was by disappointment, a few words of grateful acknowledgment. These were but passing gleams of sunshine piercing the thick clouds; whenever he was in the least displeased, he began again about the bill of divorce, telling her he had his eye on a maiden whom he intended to espouse, as soon as ever the Romans had broken their heads against the impregnable walls of the beleaguered city.

Paulinus' meeting with his mother was a sad and yet a happy one, for both were fully resigned to the will of God. Paulina kissed her son's bandaged head with maternal tenderness and compassion when he was carried to her side for a few moments. "Poor boy!" she said, "so you had to come back again from Heaven to earth. Do not be downcast; the next time you will not be robbed of your crown. Your uncle was stoned

at Lystra and thought to be dead; but the next day he revived, and won for himself a more glorious crown by all he did and suffered for Christ."

"God's will be done. I am not yet worthy to receive a crown," Paulinus answered with a melancholy smile as he kissed his mother's hand. He threw a few grains to the white doves, which flew in at the window and perched on his shoulder; then he was taken to his own little chamber where Nathaniel and the two maiden servants waited on him. Thamar was almost always in the Cenacle tending the wounded, for Eusebius could not well dispense with her skilful services. Salome was also occupied there, for Ben Gioras had agreed to part with her, when on his paying a visit to the hospital, Eusebius told him how much they were in want of nurses.

Paulinus' recovery was very slow. All the time he hoped in his heart that his wound would prove fatal. He now felt like a shipwrecked mariner swimming to shore, whom a ruthless wave swept out again into the tempest-tossed ocean, just as he had set his foot on the rock which would be his salvation. It was true that he prayed: Not my will, but Thine be done; but in his inmost heart he felt it to be no slight sacrifice that was demanded of him.

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## CHAPTER 44.

### The Attack upon the Walls.

Meanwhile Titus had carried up his entrenchments to the foot of the walls, and the colossal battering-rams began their work. Day and night the rams' heads weighing many hundredweight smote the walls with a sound like thunder. Hundreds of strong arms set in motion the massive oaken beams, suspended by chains from the framework of the besieging towers, and when the huge brazen heads at the end of the beams, swinging in regular cadence against the walls, smote them with prodigious force, they shook them to the very foundations, causing the blocks of stone, shattered and splintered, to fall from their places. In vain did the besieged cast a volley of stones and arrows from the walls upon the soldiers who were at work, or endeavor to set on fire the roofs whereby they were protected. The hurdles of which these roofs were composed were covered by iron plates, and if at any point they caught fire, the flame was speedily extinguished, for pitchers of water were placed ready at hand. Behind the fortifications more than a hundred enormous catapults were also at work. The lever of the crank, drawn back by wheel and pulley, hurled, when the rope was suddenly loosened, projectiles of immense weight in a curve against the battlements or into the city. The great brass arms of the machines also formed a species of cross bow, from which were discharged arrows tipped with iron, often twisted about with burning tow soaked in pitch, or other projectiles. In the spaces between these ancient engines of war archers were posted; behind them the cohorts were drawn up in rank and file, ready to rush out if the besieged ventured to make a sally with the view of destroying the machines or demolishing the fortifications.

On the Psephinus tower Ben Gioras and John of Gischala, the two hostile leaders met together. The latter had at length consented, in accordance with the earnest request of the brigand chief, to come down from the citadel with a party of fighting men to assist in the defence of the walls. Now they stood facing one another like a couple of snappish bull-dogs.

"You have come too late," Ben Gioras said insolently to the Galilean. "See how the wall totters under the blows of this son of Belial. Every minute I expect a wide breach will be made in it between this spot and the Women's towers. If only you had come sooner we might have made a sally together and destroyed these accursed banks and towers. May the curse of the children of Israel alight on your head!"

"The reception you give me is not exactly in keeping with your humble petition for my help," John answered with angry frown. "The best thing for me to do will be to withdraw immediately with my men. And I return the curse of Israel in double measure on your head! Why did you not go to Eleazar's succor, when he was fighting without the gate? I do not regret the reminder he brought away with him, but it was a cowardly act of treachery on your part. And for the matter of that, what business has a Captain of brigands to have the chief command in Sion? If Jerusalem is so dear to you, give up the command to me, as Eleazar had the wisdom to do, and by the God of our Fathers, no Roman shall set his foot on the hallowed soil of the holy city!"

"Not if fine words would keep him out, you boaster. How was it pray that you came out of Galilee, running away from the Romans, whereas I confronted them boldly for more than ten years, and overthrew the legions under Cestius Gallus?"

In the heat of their anger the two men seemed ready to draw their swords on one another. At that juncture a gray-bearded veteran threw himself between them with uplifted hands, exclaiming: "I adjure you by Abraham, our common Father, keep the peace, O princes of my people, at any rate as long as the enemy presses close upon us!"

"The man is right," Ben Gioras rejoined. "Here is my hand, in token that I make an honorable covenant with you."

"I scorn to take a robber's hand, and I decline an alliance which I do not want! I have made a covenant with the Lord: the temple is His and the city is His; He is able to defend His heritage." Having uttered these proud and fanatical words, the speaker turned towards the steps which led down from the top of the tower behind the ramparts.

At that moment a sound of creaking and cracking was heard, following upon the dull thud of the battering-rams, which were smiting the walls with greater force than ever. "It is giving way! It will fall!" cried the frightened soldiers, running for dear life away from the dangerous spot. The alarm came too late! A long piece of wall fell with a terrific crash. A cloud of dust rose up to heaven, and with it the agonised cry of a hundred unhappy victims, buried beneath the ruins. A wail of grief and dismay on the one hand, triumphant shouts and the fanfare of trumpets on the other, drowned their expiring groans. And forthwith the cohorts in closed ranks poured through the breach.

"Stand firm," Ben Gioras called to his men. "We will drive them back. Pour down a volley of stones and darts on these Romans, while we will receive them in the breach on the point of our swords and spears."

Then Simon Ben Gioras hurried down the stairs after John of Gischala, and both placed themselves at the head of their followers. The daring bandit-chief climbed on the ruins and met the enemy who were advancing with the shout of victory with a volley of arrows; while on both sides from the part of the wall which was not demolished, from the Women's towers and from Psephinus, stones and javelins came whizzing down on to their serried ranks. Many a Roman fell, but thousands pressed forward to fill their places. A picked body of men in the foremost ranks hurled heavy darts with unerring aim, while shoulder to shoulder, shield to shield, the invaders marched forward like an iron wall.

For more than an hour Ben Gioras stood his ground.

Presently he was told that John of Gischala was retreating with his band. "A curse on the cowardly traitor!" he ejaculated, and then giving orders to his lieutenant to hold the Romans in check as long as possible, till the new city was evacuated and the gates of the second wall barred or garrisoned, he hastened with a few chosen followers to take the most necessary measures in person. But at the breach resistance was already at an end. The besieged lost heart, and retreated, hotly pursued by the victorious enemy, to the Gate of Judgment in the second wall, where it was all Ben Gioras could do to prevent the conquerors from rushing in together with the fugitives.

Thus did the Romans gain possession of the new part of the city on the 7th of May, on the fifteenth day of the siege.<sup>1)</sup> Titus burnt it down and had the ruins cleared away from the spot whence the battering-rams were brought to bear upon the Gate of Judgment. It was through this gate that Our Lord passed, carrying His cross, and there He paused to address the women of Jerusalem in the words: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days shall come wherein they shall say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck."<sup>2)</sup> There Titus' engines of war thundered, and after four days a breach was made in the second wall.<sup>3)</sup> Once indeed did the Jews, fighting furiously, drive him back out of the narrow lanes—the *via dolorosa* traversed by the suffering Redeemer—but after he had widened the breach, his troops re-entered, and penetrated as far as the public square before the fortress of Antonia, where but a short time previously the Jews had uttered the cry: His blood be upon us, and upon our children! These words were of a truth fulfilled in a terrible manner. Blood flowed in streams over the open space, for hundreds of the people crowding to the gates of the

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus V. 7, 2.

<sup>2)</sup> St. Luke 23, 28.

<sup>3)</sup> "At the middle tower of the north part of the wall." (Jos. V. 7, 4.) This would correspond as nearly as possible to the Gate of Judgment.



tower and of the court of the temple, demanded admittance into the city, and asked in vain, for the Galilean durst not open to them, for fear lest the Romans should effect an entrance at the same time. Thus the unhappy fugitives were left to be cut down by the swords of the conquerors. This portion of the city was also burnt down, and to a great extent razed to the ground, in order to afford space for the assault upon the tower of Antonia.

On the evening of the same day on which this portion of the city—the upper city and old part—was taken by the Romans, Titus held a council of war, at which the tribune Lucius Flavus was present. The storming of the first wall and the conquest of the second had been accomplished at a great sacrifice. Was it advisable to proceed with the same tactics, and take the fortress of Antonia, said to be almost impregnable, by storm? To do so would cost the lives of thousands of men. Yet the legates Cerealis and Placidus were in favor of this proposal. Tiberius Alexander, who was an older man, counselled a closer investment of the city. Famine, he said, which had already made itself felt would weaken resistance; Jerusalem was crowded with multitudes of pilgrims, and the stores of provisions had to a great extent been destroyed through the strife of factions.

Lucius Flavus, when asked to give his opinion, confirmed the statement that provisions were already running short in the city, and endeavored to move the Commander-in-chief to compassion on account of the misery the siege brought upon so many thousand innocent persons. The women and children might at least be allowed to leave the city, and all who voluntarily laid down their arms might be spared. But his appeal for mercy was scornfully rejected by the superior officers. The rebels, they said, would certainly be very grateful to the tribune Lucius Flavus, if he relieved them of the presence of those thousands who devoured their stores without contributing in the least degree to the defence of the city.

“In that case, then, I should propose to make an end of the matter with one bold stroke, rather than leave the

inhabitants to die a lingering death by famine, and expose our own brave soldiers to the pestilence, which is certain to break out in the summer months, and by which we shall lose more men than in the bloodiest assault. I offer myself to lead the first cohorts in carrying the Antonia tower by storm."

This daring proposal was not without effect, and the majority of the commanders concurred in Lucius' opinion. Titus himself was far from wishing the siege to be prolonged; he was anxious to return to Italy and Rome in all the glory of a brilliant success to confirm the dominion his father held, and establish his own throne more firmly. But that very day he had made a closer inspection of the solid masonry of the tower of Antonia, and asked some experts in the art of demolishing walls what they thought of it. The unanimous answer was that never in their life had they seen building stones of such gigantic proportions, and it would be at any rate the work of months to shatter or dislodge any of them.

Titus consequently formed the resolution of summoning the city to surrender; and in view of overawing the inhabitants by the display of the numbers and good equipment of the army, he ordered a grand military review to be held for four days, in connection with the distribution of their pay to the troops.<sup>1)</sup> Surely, he thought, they must see that it was madness to bid defiance any longer to such forces. Afterwards he would send Josephus, one of their own countrymen, to urge them to surrender, promising that life and liberty should be ensured to any one who would go over to the enemy, whereas should any one endeavor to escape, or leave the city for the purpose of procuring provisions, he should meet with no mercy, but be crucified in sight of the city walls. If they refused to surrender, four embankments would immediately be raised up to the walls of the tower, and preparations made to take it by storm. "And you, Lucius Flavus," the General concluded, "shall have the glory of leading the assaulting column; and if you succeed in planting the Roman

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<sup>1)</sup> Josephus V. 9, 1.

eagle on the pinnacle of the temple, you shall be promoted to the dignity of legate, and all the soldiers who cross the threshold of the temple with you, shall receive a reward from the emperor and take part in our triumphal entry into Rome."

Thus Titus spoke, and thus it was determined. The military review, lasting four days, was held on a scale of great magnificence. The inhabitants of Jerusalem gazed on this splendid military spectacle from their walls and towers. Arrayed in glittering armor the auxiliaries passed first, just beyond bowshot range, to the sound of military music. Then came the Roman cohorts keeping step in perfect time, the ground trembling under their heavy tramp. On each side of the infantry were squadrons of cavalry, their horses' hoofs raising a light cloud of dust as they trotted over the plain. The march past lasted for hours; at length the central group of the long army reached the gate of Ephraim, on the flat roof of which Caiaphas' son and grandson were standing.

Eleazar still had his left arm in a sling, but he stood erect, and watched the endless ranks of the enemy with an evil look in his eye.

"They think they will frighten us by this grand display, as if we were foolish maidens," he said with a contemptuous laugh; "or perhaps they imagine that they will overthrow the walls of Jerusalem with the sound of their music, as the walls of Jericho fell down at the blast of Josue's trumpets!"

The bystanders laughed, but the laugh was forced; they began to feel their confidence shaken by the sight of the overwhelming force of the Romans.

"It is not our walls, but our courage they think to destroy with their blast," Ananus remarked.

"They will never succeed in doing that!" exclaimed a Pharisee, fastening on his phylacteries, and invoking the curse of the Almighty on the adversary. "We are the children of God; He will fight for us and defend His house. Count them if you can, as they all march by. Every one of those thousands is doomed to destruction. As stubble before the fire, so shall they be consumed by the wrath of the Lord!"

"Amen," the people responded: "May the Lord overthrow them as Amalek and the children of Moab!"

"What company is that coming up with long lances and gilded armor, preceded by a host of trumpeters?" Ananus asked.

"By the sword of Gideon!" Eleazar exclaimed, with flaming eyes, "those are the Commanders with their body guard! The one on the black charger, whose helmet gleams in the sun so brightly, is Titus on whom I actually laid hands three weeks ago, and the one next him, riding a gray horse is that accursed centurion Lucius Flavus, whom I hope some day to trample under foot like the venomous snake he is. Quick, Joas, span the great catapult which we took from Cestius Gallus. I really think we can hit those sons of Belial from here!"

Joas shrugged his shoulders, and said it would do no harm to try. In a moment strong hands seized the handles of the winch, and the great steel springs were bent. "We have reached the line marks," said Joas, adjusting the heavy missile. "Still I expect we shall fall short by a good distance."

"Then give it a few more turns. — Do your best, my good fellows, the cords will not break so easily."

"Not the cords, but the springs."

"Do as I say!" Eleazar enjoined, stamping his foot on the ground. Then he went behind the engine, to see that the shot was aimed aright at the group of officers. The machinery groaned, drops of sweat fell from the brows of the men at work. The muscles stood up like knots on their sinewy arms, and with great difficulty the steel springs were bent an inch lower.

"Stand back, all of you!" cried Joas. "If the bow breaks, it will be your death!"

"Give it another turn," said Eleazar, grinding his teeth. "Now let go!"

The cords gave way, the springs righted themselves with a sharp sound, every eye followed the projectile, as it flew whizzing through the air. "It has hit!" screamed Eleazar, leaping with delight.

"Not the right man though, not the one on the black horse, but the one on the gray," his father remarked.

"And not the rider, but the horse," Joas added. "All the same, it was a masterly shot, considering the distance."

"It was the right man after all," Eleazar muttered under his breath. Then he said aloud: "The rider has not altogether escaped. Look, they are pulling him from under his horse, and carrying him into the tents. Quick, span the catapult once again!"

This shot of Eleazar's was a signal for all the catapults on the other forts to commence action. But their missiles fell far short of the mark, and before the great catapult on the tower of Ephraim could again be worked, all the columns of soldiery were well out of range of the shot. Till a late hour company after company might be seen on the north side of the wall, marching towards the hills on the west, whence the legions retired into their camp for the night.

The three days subsequent to this review were occupied with military manoeuvres and the distribution of pay to the soldiers. The sight of the vast army in battle array made less impression on the besieged than did that of the liberal rations of bread, meat and wine given out to the troops; for within the walls of Jerusalem the pangs of hunger were already felt, whereas, owing to the excellent commissariat arrangements, an abundant supply of provisions was daily brought up to the Roman camp from Caesarea.

On the fourth day Titus sent Jòsephus to call solemnly upon his countrymen to surrender. Heralds went before him with blast of trumpet to demand for him an attentive hearing; two armed men stood beside him, ready to cover him with their shields. The Zealots and Pharisees received him with howls of detestation: Titus could not have chosen a more unwelcome orator to address the people. "Traitor! Deserter! Apostate! Slave of Rome! Son of malediction!" such were the epithets hurled at him, and for some time he could not make his voice heard for the uproar.

In his history Josephus gives his speech at full length. In it he proved, with not a little prolixity, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem that it was useless for them

to rely as they did upon divine assistance. God at a former occasion permitted the Assyrians to burn down His holy temple as a chastisement for the transgressions of His people, and the crimes of which the Jews were now guilty were far more heinous than those of their forefathers who were taken captive to Babylon. Moreover the Assyrians came with the intention of destroying the city and the temple, whereas Titus wished to preserve both the one and the other; all he demanded was that the people should submit to the authority of the Emperor and pay the tribute due to him, as they were in justice bound to do. If they still persisted in refusing to accept the hand held out to them, the responsibility of flinging the firebrand into the sanctuary rested with them.

All was in vain. Although a considerable proportion of the populace were in favor of surrender, the Jewish leaders and the more fanatical sect of the Jews heaped contumely and curses on the orator, whom they cordially hated, and threw stones at him to force him to withdraw from their vicinity.

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## CHAPTER 45.

### Thamar's Abduction.

In the evening of the same day Ananus Ben Caiaphas had a conversation of some importance with his son.

"There is a certain amount of truth in what that loquacious Joseph Ben Matthias was saying," remarked the elder of the two men, who was beginning to feel uneasy at remaining in the doomed city. "I have been at the greatest pains to build up our broken fortunes, the fortune which will one day be yours, yours exclusively, since your brother has been seduced by the Nazarites. Upon my word, you have not been of much assistance to me Eleazar. The only thing you did was to promote the first insurrection, when the archives where the debtors' bonds are deposited were burnt down. The Lord be thanked for that! otherwise you have been more for spending than earning money, and you have squandered large sums to gratify your overweening pride."

"Well, at any rate pride is as much worth a sacrifice as the low avarice which is your deity," Eleazar answered contemptuously. "What is it you are driving at?"

"Is that a way for a son to speak to his father?"

"Much right you have to reproach me with want of respect! How do you treat your father?"

"Hold your tongue, you know the old man is mad. He called down the curse upon our house, and I believe on our nation also, though you need not think I am inclined to turn Nazarite. But I want to elude the ruin which is impending, and save my hard-won gold for myself and for you. Joseph Ben Matthias was right. However can we hold out against such an immense army? And the God of our Fathers will give the city into the hands of our enemies, as He did the host of Assyrians."

"How do you propose to secure the 'hard-won gold' as you are pleased to call the shekels you and your

accomplice Zabulon purloined out of the treasury of the temple?" Eleazar inquired.

"Purloined! You mean rescued from the robbers and the Romans. If you have any qualms of conscience, you can restore a portion of it to the temple later on."

"Then how do you intend to convey this—well, we will say loan from the treasury—and your own person at the same time to a place of safety?"

"Leave me to do that, Eleazar. I have never yet been at a loss for a good idea. I know that one of these days, a considerable number of the towns-people are going to attempt to leave the city. They have bribed the watchmen at the Essene Gate and agreed with Sheik Mardoeh to let them through for a consideration of two or three hundred shekels. I mean to join the party, but how I shall conceal my gold from the hungry eyes of the Arab Sheik is my business. I only want to know if you will come too?"

"Not upon any consideration," Eleazar answered promptly. "Even if I were certain that your attempt would be successful, nothing would induce me to forsake the city and the temple. I am not so dastardly as that! Besides I do not despair of victory; the Romans have sustained heavy losses. And that ridiculous parade before the city walls, and the fact that Titus employed that glib-tongued Joseph to invite us formally to surrender, makes me suspect that the Romans themselves have their doubts as to the conquest of the city. Who knows what the latest tidings from Rome may be; who knows whether matters may not have come to such a pass with his father Vespasian as to oblige Titus to raise the siege and hasten back to Rome with his legions? I fancied I read something of the sort between the lines while that traitor Joseph Ben Matthias was delivering his harangue."

"Yes, if our provisions would hold out for a couple of months longer, but you know perfectly well that we have only enough to subsist upon for two weeks; already the thousands of pilgrims are pinched by hunger and dying off like flies. In a week's time our soldiers will be too weak to wield their weapons."



"As you please, Father. I will not keep you back. We have a good stock of provisions still up there in the vaults beneath the temple, of which happily neither Ben Gioras nor the Galilean have an inkling. It is all the same to me to have one mouth more or less to fill. You are welcome to remain there in the temple with me and hide your money. I intend to move my headquarters up there in a day or two, and take two or three persons with me. You will not come? Very well, then go your way. Only let me warn you that they threaten to crucify every one who attempts to escape surreptitiously. And little faith as I have in the word of a Roman, I believe in regard to promises of that sort they are accustomed to do as they say."

Ananus shivered at these words. He remembered hearing the shout: Crucify him, crucify him! on an evil day long past. The recollection haunted him, and as if under a spell he turned away and left his son's presence without another word.

While this conversation was going on in Caiaphas' house, Thamar entered Paulinus' chamber, to pay him one of her flying visits, before going to take the night work in the hospital. Paulinus was now so far recovered as to be quite out of danger, and able to sit up all day. In the cool morning and evening hours Nathaniel helped him into the garden, where he sat under the old fig-tree, amusing himself with the white doves who congregated round him.

When Thamar entered, Nathaniel had just brought him indoors and he was finding fault with him on account of the scanty supply of bread-crumbs and seeds which he had given him for the doves.

"Bread crumbs indeed!" said Nathaniel, "I eat them myself now; as for corn, it is worth its weight in gold. Ask Thamar if it is not so."

"Has it really come to that in the city?" Paulinus asked in dismay. "You two look so pale and half-famished, you especially Nathaniel. Rhode too, complains of headache and giddiness. You all fast, while I live on the fat of the land. That must not be allowed. I will not touch another mouthful of the good things Rhode prepares for me."

"It is medicine for you. Eusebius said you must be well fed or you would never regain your strength," Thamar answered.

"Yes, eat the good things while you can get them. Would to God I had been stoned too," Nathaniel said with a sigh, for the unlucky boy was growing very fast, and consequently felt the pinch of hunger very keenly.

"What a child you are, you remind me of Benjamin," Thamar said smiling. "For the matter of that we have a good store as yet, for Eusebius bought a supply of corn with the money you brought from Rome, just at the right time. Only we must not let anyone get wind of that, or we shall be overrun with unwelcome guests. You must be on your guard, Nathaniel! One hears of such deeds of violence in the city. It would be different if it was the really poor, driven by actual starvation to take the bread of others; but it is for the most part hordes of drunken soldiers, who waste in revelry all that they can lay hands on."

"When they see me, they certainly will not think that there is much to be got here in the way of comestibles," Nathaniel said. "You ought to try if you cannot multiply the loaves, Paulinus. Are you not the nephew of a saint, and yourself half a martyr! Do as Elias the prophet did with the meal and the oil at Sarephta."

"No, no, one must not jest about miracles," Thamar said reprovingly.

"He means no harm. Let us pray with confidence: Give us this day our daily bread, and the Lord will not forsake us."

"I say that every day more than once," Nathaniel said. "I only wish my prayers were more efficacious. Now I am going to catch sparrows. They will make a nice little addition to your daily bread, Paulinus, and then too they will not any longer eat the corn we throw out for the doves. The birds are well off. They can fly over the walls and over the heads of the Romans and fill their crops out in the fields, where Almighty God provides a meal for them. I wish I had wings!"

Thamar laughed, and said: "When you are an angel you will have them. But that is a distant day. Now

come and escort me to the Cenacle, it is time that I was at my post. Salome and Sara will be tired out with their day's work. Goodbye Paulinus, pray for me."

"The peace of the Lord be with you. You are fortunate in being permitted to work for God, whereas I must waste all my time here."

Before Thamar left the house on her way to the cenacle, she asked Nathaniel if he was quite certain that the officer who was wounded by the bolt from the catapult was Lucius the centurion.

"Yes," Nathaniel replied, "I saw him quite distinctly. The horse was killed on the spot; Lucius was dragged out from under him, he tried to stand up, but could not, and two soldiers carried him away to the tents. To-day while Josephus was delivering his interminable harangue, I fancy I saw Benjamin, but of that I am not so sure. I shall look out for him, and if he is really here, I will devise ways and means of sending a message to him."

Benjamin in the camp! Was it possible that her father was there too? Thamar wondered whether it would be practicable through his or Lucius' means to arrange for Paulinus and his mother and a few others to be exchanged for some prisoners of war. Eusebius would wish to remain at his post. And Salome, and she herself? A struggle arose in her mind. Should she sacrifice her young life in serving these thankless men, and perish miserably in the destruction of this ill-fated city? Was not her place rather at Lucius' side; he was a Christian now, and united to him, a whole lifetime of happiness might be hers. No, she must leave all that to God, and in the meantime she would not abandon the work she had undertaken for love of Him. She would remain in Jerusalem, but the others might seek safety elsewhere.

When Thamar was leaving the house with Nathaniel, they found Rhode at the door, giving some broken meats to a poor woman, and exhorting her not to tell anyone. "God knows," she said to the beggar, "we are all on short rations now, and our lives would not be safe another hour, if it was known that we have a few hand-

fuls of wheat in the storeroom and a few vegetables in the garden."

"God forbid that I should tell a single person where I get the means of keeping body and soul together!" the woman asseverated. "And my poor child, the last I have left! Who knows if I can nurse her till the season of tribulation is past! Alas, these are terrible times indeed!"

"These are the days of tribulation which our Lord foretold to the daughters of Jerusalem," Thamar said. She knew the woman, and inquired how a neighbor's family was going on.

"The father has been killed, the oldest son has been killed, four children, among them sweet little Esther, have died of hunger one after another, and when I went in this morning to see the mother, who has lately gave birth to an infant, I found her lying dead, with the babe at her breast. The old mother was sitting by, her reason quite gone. It will be the same with me soon. Happy the childless! Happy those who are dead!"

"I wish I could help you, my good woman," Thamar said, her eyes full of tears. "We must pray that the days of distress may be shortened."

"They cannot last much longer. All the houses are full of bodies in every stage of decomposition, and one may see citizens who used to keep a good table hunting in the gutters and drains for something to eat. Not only what the law forbids as unclean, but the most disgusting refuse is devoured as a delicacy. Brothers and sisters fight for a scrap of mouldy bread; mothers will even take the last morsel out of their children's mouths. Starvation drives to sad excesses."

Thamar shuddered as she listened to the woman, who herself came of a wealthy family, and had never thought she would be reduced to beg for a piece of bread. With a heavy heart she proceeded to the coenaculum with Nathaniel, who was horror struck at what he had just heard. "I had no idea matters were as bad as that. I will not complain again of being hungry myself," he said.

They had not gone many steps when a piercing shriek

roused them from their sad thoughts. A wild rabble came running down the street, Thamar and her companion had only just time to get out of the way behind a projecting wall. Pursued by the mob who were beating him and pelting him with stones, an old man, half-naked, strode down the street, tearing his hair and beard, and crying in a shrill voice, "Woe, woe to the city!"

"That is crazy Josue," Nathaniel said to Thamar. "For weeks he has gone about by day and night in the lanes of the city; neither scolding nor severe stripes avail to make him desist from his direful cry. Listen, he is beginning again."

"A voice from the east, a voice from the west! A voice from the four winds! A voice of destruction from the beginning! A voice against Jerusalem and the holy house! A voice against the bridegrooms and the brides; a voice against the whole people!" Thus the man continued to cry at brief intervals, heedless of the blows that were showered on him. His piercing voice was heard above the clamor of the populace. Thamar, trembling in every limb, put her fingers in her ears. Just as he uttered his last cry, woe to the city and the people!, adding: Woe to myself also! a large stone struck him, killing him immediately.<sup>1)</sup>

"Let him be, he has got what he deserves for speaking against the temple and the holy city," one of the bystanders said. "Now say where is there a house about here in which we can eat our fill? We will grip the people who withhold their good fare from the brave defenders of Zion so tightly as to compel them to give up the key of their storerooms."

One of the mob shouted out the name of an opulent citizen on the market, and the rabble with loud shouts rushed in that direction.

Thamar stepped up to the side of the dying man, who lay in a pool of blood. She was just going to send Nathaniel to fetch Sabbas, when she felt her arm grasped from behind.

"This is Thamar?", a voice inquired. "I do not want to take the old woman instead of the young one a second time."

<sup>1)</sup> Wars of the Jews VI. 5, 5.

"Giezi, what are you thinking of to lay hold of Thamar in that manner?" Nathaniel cried.

"Now I have made sure," Giezi said. "The servant must do what his master bids him. Do not scream, my pretty maid, we are not going to murder you. On the contrary, I am going to take you to a place where there is plenty of good food to be had."

Nathaniel was taken into custody also, and both he and Thamar were conducted to Caiaphas' house close by. There they were told to wait until Eleazar came.

As soon as he appeared, Nathaniel asked his brother indignantly whether this was the way he rewarded Thamar for her care of him.

"I cannot say she gave herself much trouble in nursing me," Eleazar answered sullenly. "She knows very well on whom she lavished most of her care. Besides I have an old account to settle with her about that Centurion Lucius, and her own flight from the temple. And I have a word to say to you too. Amends must be made for your last offence presently. Now both of you come with me to the temple. You ought to thank me on your knees for taking you where you will be perfectly safe, and for the present at least in no fear of starvation."

Then turning to Thamar he added sarcastically: "What, no thanks for such thoughtful affection? Would you have me take the pale youth with the languishing eyes, sweet Paulinus, as well? Oh yes, I know his name well enough, only I cannot pronounce it in such melting accents as certain fair lips can. My tongue is too stiff, too manly for that sort of thing." Then changing his tone to a more conciliatory one, he continued: "Well, Rabbi Sadoc's lovely daughter, I will be generous enough to overlook this and other little flirtations, for I shall look forward to claim you as my bride when I come out victorious from this tussle with the Romans. I saw once that you have a heart that can feel enthusiasm for a hero, the savior of his people."

Without responding a single word, Thamar turned away from the heartless man. Eleazar gave a scornful laugh, and said: "Well, if I consent to take sweet Paulinus up to the temple too, you cannot be angry with me. I promise you not to let him out of my sight,

and it will depend in a great measure on the way you behave to me, whether, and in what way I make him feel my vengeance. And I will take care you do not play me the same trick as you once did with your fine centurion."

Rachel now entered the room and looked rather embarrassed when she saw the veiled woman. "I do not know whether you are acquainted," Eleazar said, highly exasperated at Thamar's persistent silence. "This, Rachel, is Rabbi Sadoc's daughter, who is destined to take your place as soon as I have leisure to write a bill of divorce for you. Or perhaps you can live under the same roof as was customary in our father Abraham's time. This daughter of Levi will supply with interest the beauty and wealth which you lack. On the other hand, she might take a lesson from you in obedience and submission. Well, that will come in time, we must train her to it. Thamar, let me introduce you to Rachel, who unfortunately has hitherto called herself my wife, but the bill of divorce is as good as written, and at the first hint from you, I will turn her out of the house. I have neither children nor happiness to thank her for. Meanwhile see how you can get on together, you the lily of the valley beside this withered old stick of flax."

More provoked by the shameful rudeness with which Eleazar treated his lawful spouse than by any indignities offered to herself, Thamar went up to Rachel and took her hand kindly, saying: "Dear lady, you are much to be pitied for being married to such an unfeeling wretch. Do not be afraid that I shall ever under any consideration consent to unite myself to such a tyrant."

"Noble maiden, do not judge my husband too harshly," Rachel replied. "He used strong language, and he often seems as hard as the breastplate he wears, but he has his good side. He is valiant, he loves his nation, he can be really magnanimous. It is my fault, I assure you, that we have not been happy together. You will know better how to please him, and I will serve you as Hagar served Sara."

"Dear Rachel, what you say does you great credit, and only shows your husband's baseness in stronger relief. I will love you as an older sister, but my creed alone would forbid a closer alliance. Jesus of Nazareth

restored marriage to its original purity; it is the union of one man and one woman."

While this conversation went on between Rachel and Thamar, Giezi had conducted Caiaphas into the room. The old man, whose hands were bound, entered just as the last words were uttered. His ear caught the name he hated and feared; his knees tottered and with a quivering voice he cried: "Jesus of Nazareth, who is speaking of Him? Has He come to judgment on the clouds of heaven? Hide me from Him! Bury me in the bosom of the earth! I cannot bear to see Him!"

"He is not coming to judgment, old imbecile. He has been dead and buried for thirty-seven years," Eleazar answered.

"Buried if you will. Joseph of Arimathea buried Him, and we put a seal on His sepulchre. But dead? Would that I could think he was dead; He rose again, only you must not let any one know that. And He will come again on the clouds of heaven —"

"Those are the fancies of your diseased brain! Hold your tongue now or I will shut you up again in the vaults and leave you there to die of hunger, instead of taking you with me up to the temple," Eleazar said with a threatening gesture.

"To the temple, quite true, to offer the sacrifice. Where is the linen ephod, the girdle of many colors, the violet tunic with the little bells of pure gold and the pomegranates; where is the breastplate with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on the twelve precious stones? Alas, alas, all is lost and gone! I dare no longer offer sacrifice since the day when the veil was rent and the dead appeared. Woe, woe, everlasting woe!"

"It is grievous to hear the old man," Eleazar said, for the pitiable sight cut him to the heart. "But I cannot consent to leave him here. We shall have to tie up his mouth, in order to get him up to the temple without attracting notice."

"We will try what can be done with kindness," Giezi answered; "You go on first, I will bring him up afterwards. Happily the sky is clear, for if he saw clouds he would begin his nonsense again."

Eleazar took Thamar by the hand and laying his



other hand on Nathaniel's arm, he ordered Rachel and the others to follow him. He led them through unfrequented lanes and byways to the ruins of the Asmonean palace, and then along the subterranean passages that ran beneath the temple. In one of the cells that were there he confined the crazy old man, giving the key to Giezi, and telling him to provide the prisoner with food. He then asked Thamar and Nathaniel if they would promise to make no attempt to escape, for in that case he would give them comfortable rooms with Rachel in one of the temple buildings above ground; otherwise they must be imprisoned below with the old man.

"O Thamar, let us be above ground with Rachel! There we shall have light and air, I shall go mad down here," Nathaniel urged.

Thamar hesitated for a minute, then she promised not to go back to the old part of the city. She saw no use in flight, since Eleazar was acquainted with the only spot where she could take refuge, and certainly there was no possibility of escape if she was shut in one of those terrible vaults.

Accordingly Eleazar conducted his brother and the two women to one of the wings of the temple buildings, formerly occupied by the consecrated virgins. The ground floor and the inner halls adjoining the Court of the Women and the Court of the Priests were apportioned to the Zealots, whose leaders inhabited the chambers in the first story. But beneath the roof of the temple were about a dozen chambers shut off by a solid door, beyond which the rough soldiery were not allowed to go. There old Phenenna lived in care and sorrow with a few faithful companions; by far the greater number had dispersed at the outbreak of disturbances like chaff before the wind. But the few that remained still endeavored to fulfil the duties of the service of the temple, even when the pavement was dyed with blood and strewn with corpses.

Rachel and Thamar were placed with these virgins, while Eleazar told his brother he must either resume his former occupation of helping the bakers, or if he preferred, join the ranks against the Romans. Nathaniel chose the humbler office, not because he was afraid of fighting, but because he thought it would scarcely be

right to resist the Romans, since they came as the executors of the divine judgments.

Phenenna demurred for a long time at receiving Thamar again, as she could not approve the reasons which had induced her to take flight. Nor could she understand how her former favorite could have become a Christian. Yet gradually she became accustomed to the change; and indeed she began herself to waver, when she beheld how strikingly the terrible prophecies uttered by Christ were fulfilled. A new sphere of activity was now opened to Thamar. Besides the corporal works of mercy which she still had opportunity to practice on behalf of the wounded, she practised one of the spiritual works of mercy in regard to her old mistress, Rachel and the others: "Instructing the ignorant."

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Note to Chapter 45.

Josephus thus describes the famine (Wars of the Jews, V. 10.) "There was no corn (as early as June) which any where appeared publicly, but the seditious came running into and searching men's private houses; if they found none, they tormented them worse, because they supposed they had more carefully concealed it... Many there were indeed who sold all they had for one measure of corn; it was of wheat, if they were of the richer class, but of barley if they were of the poorer. When these had so done, they shut themselves up in the inmost rooms of their house, and eat with avidity the corn they had gotten; some without grinding it by reason of the extremity of the want they were in... It was a miserable case, and one that would justly bring tears into our eyes, how men stood as to their food; the more powerful had more than enough, and the weaker were lamenting for want of it. But the famine was destructive to all good feeling, and to nothing so much as to modesty, in so much that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their mouths, and, what was more to be pitied, so did mothers as to their infants; and when those that were most dear to them were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives... Many poor citizens crept out of the city by night as far as the Roman outposts, to gather some plants and herbs that grew wild; and when they thought they had got clear of the enemy, they fell into the hands of their own people, who snatched from them what they had brought with them, even while they entreated them, calling upon the name of God, to give them back some part... It is impossible to go distinctly over every instance of their iniquity. I shall therefore speak my mind briefly: "Never did any other city suffer such miseries."

## CHAPTER 46.

### The great Sortie.

As soon as it was apparent to Titus that in spite of the grand parade of troops and the persuasions of Josephus, the besieged were fully resolved not to surrender, he ordered the assault to be made on the tower of Antonia. Four legions were to advance upon it simultaneously, a fifth was to remain in reserve. The legions labored with incredible ardor each at his own share of the embankment they were raising, and on the seventeenth day it was brought up to the foot of the fortress, although the soldiers had been greatly harassed and hindered in their work by the missiles of all kinds that were cast at them, and by the frequent minor sallies made by the Jews. Now the engines for battering the walls were to be brought up and the attack was to be begun.

The besieged had not been inactive while these operations were going on. The constant discharge of darts and stones from the machines of which they had more than three hundred, and which they had learnt to use with great skill, and the occasional sallies of which mention has been made, were little more than a blind, intended to divert attention from the great blow they were preparing.

"We must undermine their works," Eleazar had said to John of Gischala, one day when he was standing beside him on the roof of the north-west turret of the Antonia tower, looking at the embankment in course of construction. "Though only just commenced, it is easy to determine with accuracy the four points towards which they will be brought up."

"That certainly requires no preternatural wisdom for they always construct the banks in a straight line. But how and where are we to undermine them?"

"By a subterranean passage under the foundations,"

"And have our walls fall down upon us, before the Romans begin to bring their battering-rams to bear on them!"

"Nothing of the sort. Let a narrow tunnel be bored beneath one of the stones that are twenty cubits wide, so as to leave ample support for it on either side. Beyond the walls underground galleries can be made, till we get beneath the embankment."

"And pray how will you know in the dark when you have got underneath them?"

"We shall hear that. The miners will be able to tell when the Romans are at work over their heads, then they need only proceed in a straight line, and undermine the bank as far as possible. Of course the ground must be underpinned with cross-beams as we go on. Finally, a quantity of wood, daubed with pitch and bitumen, must be carried in, and when the Romans bring up their battering-rams overhead, we will set the whole on fire, and you shall have the satisfaction of seeing the earth swallow them up, together with their diabolical machines."

"If words would accomplish your purpose, you would have swallowed them up, one and all, long ago!" the Galilean answered with an incredulous air.

Eleazar's dark eyes shot an angry look at him. But he controlled his temper, and said: "Let me attempt it at any rate. If the plan fails, it will have cost nothing but the labor expended on it, and I will undertake that with my Zealots."

"And what if the wall you have undermined fall in?"

"If so, you may nail me alive to the door of the temple!"

"Very well. Set to work then with your Zealots. But mark my words: if the wall gives way, you will die by my hand, as surely as I hope for the salvation of Israel."

Eleazar lost no time in beginning to bore the tunnel. Day and night the work was carried on under his superintendence. Fresh relays of workmen were ready to relieve their comrades at intervals, and long before the

banks were brought up to the foot of the walls, he had carried the mine beyond them, and could ascertain from the noise the Romans made in driving piles into the ground above his head, the direction the subterranean passages were to take. He had carried on his operations for a distance of some three hundred furlongs (173 yards) when Titus, having completed the banks, brought up the heavy portable towers with the battering-rams.

While the Romans were already exulting over the success of their enterprise, Eleazar once more stepped up to John of Gischala on the flat roof of the fortress, and with proud assurance announced to him that within an hour or two the banks would fall in. The Galilean merely shrugged his shoulders, and would not vouchsafe Eleazar so much as a look.

"You may believe me or not as you please," the Jew retorted, "so long as you will give your men orders to hold themselves in readiness to make a sortie together with my followers. Ben Gioras shall also be apprised of what is to occur. If we do but attack the Romans with our united forces before they recover from the confusion which the destruction of the banks will produce, we shall undoubtedly succeed not only in demolishing their works, but in putting their whole army to rout."

"Very good, I will have my men ready, and send word to Simon, so that they may all laugh you to scorn for a blind mole, if your burrowing proves a failure," the Galilean answered, giving at the same time the necessary orders to his troops. As soon as Eleazar saw them drawn up in order of battle, he gave the signal to fire the mine.

The embankment was alive with Romans who, protected by their shields, were drawing their towers nearer and nearer to the walls. John had the heavy stones wherewith he intended to shatter the pent-houses under the shelter of which the enemy worked, lifted up on to the battlements, continuing meanwhile, to discharge volleys of missiles from his engines.

"Well, how much longer is it to be? Will the banks soon fall in? When are the Romans to go down to hell like Core and his company?" Such were the questions he kept asking Eleazar in a mocking manner.

At first Eleazar took his contempt very coolly. But after a time he bit his lips, and could scarcely conceal the uneasiness he felt. An hour had already passed since he gave the signal to ignite the combustibles, and as yet no sign of a conflagration was perceptible.

"There is the end of your boasting!" the Galilean exclaimed. "Now go yourself and tell Ben Gioras what a brilliant success you have achieved by your burrowing!"

Almost as he uttered the words, a terrific crash was heard, followed by loud cries, as one of the banks for the length of about a hundred yards suddenly collapsed, all the men and machinery upon it being swallowed up in the ground. A thick cloud of dust and smoke rose up, for the earth that fell in partly stifled the subterranean fire; but in a few moments the flames leapt up, catching the hurdles and woodwork of the embankment, as well as the cross-beams and the wooden towers, so that these being ignited, the whole was soon in a blaze.

At the first sound made by the falling in of the banks Eleazar uttered a shout of triumph, which was re-echoed from the towers and ramparts. "What do you say now, you Galilean fool? Now do you see what the blind moles have done!" he cried to John of Gischala.

Before the latter could recover from his astonishment, to right and left a second and a third bank fell in with a prodigious noise.

"Up and at them!" Eleazar shouted. "Now the Lord of Hosts is with us of a truth! The Lord is a mighty warrior! Now the day of His vengeance has come upon His adversaries! Now we will destroy them with the flame of fire and the edge of the sword! Follow me to victory or to death!"

Such were the words Eleazar addressed to his Zealots who, ready armed for battle, rushed with him at their head, against the Romans, on whom great consternation had fallen. The Galileans followed, while from the gates of the upper city Simon's bands poured forth, together with a host of Idumeans. Marvels of valor, of almost fool-hardy daring, were performed. Heedless of danger, the Jews threw themselves among their foes as

eagerly as if they were going to join in feasting and the dance, and they succeeded in setting fire to the fourth bank, which the undermining had failed to destroy. The Romans seeing the flames, came running up to save the battering-rams and the hurdles, by pulling them out of the fire; but the Jews dashed through the flames, caught hold of the engines of war, and held them fast, although the iron part of them had become red hot. The fire continued to spread, and the Romans, despairing of extinguishing it, and seeing no hope of saving their works, withdrew to the camp.<sup>1)</sup>

"Pursue them!" cried Eleazar. "Who wants a good meal? There are provisions in the camp ready cooked, enough to last many a day."

With no slight annoyance did Titus behold the disaster that had befallen the work he had accomplished at the cost of so much labor. Calling out the reserve troops, he fell upon the Jews in flank, but martial discipline and ordinary courage seemed unable to cope with the mad fury that animated the besieged. They fought hand to hand, flinging themselves without any caution upon the points of the enemy's spears, dragging the soldiers with them to the ground.<sup>2)</sup> The Roman line was broken, and the Jews pushed their way as far as the fortifications of their adversaries' camp, urged on by fanatical excitement, burning hate, and despair of deliverance.

Benjamin had been looking out from the wall of the camp towards the city, watching for the white doves which the Mother of God had loved; but on hearing the noise and the shouts that arose when the banks gave way, and seeing the flames and smoke rise up, he ran back to the general's tent, where the tribune Lucius lay, suffering from a very painful contusion of the right thigh.

"Lucius, the Jews are burning the works, and numbers of people are running about in confusion between here and the city," the boy exclaimed.

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<sup>1)</sup> Josephus V. 11, 5.

<sup>2)</sup> Ibid.

"Surely the sentinels have not left their posts! Reach me my sword, boy, and help me to buckle on my armor. I must try if I cannot drag myself to the entrenchments."

Benjamin lent his aid, and leaning on a lance, the tribune managed to limp the short distance to the wall of the camp. The gates were guarded as usual, no extraordinary precautions against a surprise had been taken. Lucius took in the situation at a glance; by means of a trumpeter, he summoned all the soldiers who were present in the camp, engaged in various duties, to the spot, and bade them betake themselves some to the fortifications, others to the catapults which stood ready for use. Scarcely had he done so, when the Jews, breaking through the Roman lines, rushed pell-mell towards the camp.

"Look, do you see that big fellow, the foremost of all, that is Eleazar," exclaimed Benjamin, who was standing at Lucius' side. Almost as he spoke, the leader of the Zealots was seen to fall, severely wounded. But this did not arrest the progress of his followers; onward they rushed over his prostrate body, heedless of the missiles that beat upon them like hailstones in a storm. Some of them were so rash as to leap into the trench, and dash themselves with frenzied eagerness against the fortifications, which they were impotent to scale. However the mad fury of the Zealots soon spent itself when they encountered the cool, determined resistance of the guards. They fell by hundreds, and being attacked on both sides by the cohorts Titus brought up, they were reluctantly compelled to retreat with heavy losses. The fierce Romans pursued them to the city gates, and those fugitives who did not arrive in time to gain admittance were cut down without mercy. Quarter was neither asked nor granted.

Titus rode back to the camp in no very pleasant humor. The labor of three weeks had been rendered fruitless, and his loss in men and in engines of war was great. "One or two more such sorties," he observed to Josephus, who was riding beside him, "and we shall have to make an ignominious retreat. Your countrymen



are more daring and reckless of their lives than any men I ever met with."

"They are desperate, Caesar, and desperadoes are generally placed in confinement," the apostate answered.

"By Jupiter you are right," the General replied. "I must close them in with a wall. See there, our friend Lucius Flavus, who regardless of his injured limb, has hastened to the outposts to defend the camp. That is what I call really praiseworthy."

"It was well that he did so, General," said the centurion of the guard, "if the tribune had not come, I believe those madmen would have stormed the camp!"

Titus sprang from his horse. "Allow me, Tribune," he said, offering his arm to Lucius, "to help you back to the tent. It is the least I can do to testify the satisfaction you have given me."

This act on the General's part elicited a murmur of approval from the soldiers. "If I arrived on the ramparts at an opportune moment, you have to thank my little friend here for it, since it was he who called me to my post," Lucius replied.

"What can I give you in reward for this service? There are no toys to be had in the camp."

Benjamin thought for a moment. "I should like — oh stop, I know now what I will ask for. I should very much like to have a sack of corn, to send to my friends in the city."

"It would be better to send word to them to come out to us, if you can get a message taken to them. I have sworn that I would spare the life of no Jew, but an exception shall be made in favor of your friends. It will not do to send corn to them, the chances are that it would never get to them, and if it did, they would soon be robbed of it."

The boy acknowledged that the General was right, and thanked him for his kind promise. "I shall venture to remind you of it when you take the city," he said, and then followed Lucius to his tent.

Titus immediately after sent for the soothsayer Quartus Querulus, who, without being asked, had that morning informed him that the portents found in the

entrails of the sacrificial victims were highly favorable. The imposter had taken for granted that the Romans would succeed in drawing the battering-rams up to the walls of the Antonia tower in the course of the day and he hoped by this forecast to gain favor with Titus, as he had with the credulous Vespasian. Now that all had turned out so differently to what he anticipated, the soothsayer prudently kept in the background, and very much against his will he followed the lictors, who came to conduct him to the Commander's presence. "Miserable deceiver! What made you predict good fortune for me today? If you dare to mislead me in this way again, the lictors' rods shall teach you how to learn your arts better!" Such were the angry words wherewith Titus greeted the delinquent, whose bloated countenance showed that he was a more zealous votary of Bacchus than of Jupiter.

But the rascal had an answer ready. Raising his watery eyes to heaven, he exclaimed: "O ye immortal gods! Behold the blindness of the sons of earth! Even this man, the offspring of the divine Vespasian fails to discern the good fortune, which you, graciously accepting the sacrifices I offered, destined for his portion. And yet you preserved his life from imminent peril, you guarded the camp when danger threatened, and finally gave victory to his arms."

Vexed as he was, Titus could not refrain from smiling at this subterfuge. "Well," he said, "I suppose this time I must let you off. But beware how you again prophesy to me such good fortune as has fallen to my lot today; otherwise you may count yourself lucky if it is only your back that makes acquaintance with the lictor's rods, not your neck with the headman's axe!"

Quartus Querulus made his obeisance with the best grace he could, and was about to withdraw, to seek consolation from the wineflagon, when the arrival of a troop of cavalry before the General's tent induced him to delay his departure awhile. The horsemen were bringing in a large number of prisoners.

These unfortunate individuals had taken advantage of the sortie on the north side of the city to make good

their escape through the Gate of the Essenes in the direction of Hebron. But instead of the Sheik Mardoch, whom they supposed to be in that vicinity, and whose protection they hoped to obtain by means of a bribe, they fell in with a band of Roman horse, who were making a circuit of the city to cut off convoys bringing supplies. The officer in command drove the women and children back to the city, while the men, bound and fastened in couples like cattle on their way to the shambles, were conducted to the camp. Most of them seemed to have resigned themselves to their fate with stoical serenity. They did not expect that their lives would be spared, and a quick, though a violent death appeared preferable to the lingering torture of starvation.

One man only, an old beggar, clad in dirty, ragged garments, and driving before him an ass laden with two sacks of hay, behaved like one demented. He cast himself at the Centurion's feet, and piteously entreated him to let him go with his ass.

"By Hercules, most excellent Caesar," the officer said as he related the occurrence, "it is not my way to show myself tender-hearted. But the old beggar really amused me, and I was going to let him go, as he clung so tenaciously to his miserable existence, with the women and children back to the city; he would make a suitable protector for them. Of course I meant to keep the ass with the fodder, since we could make use of it. Thereupon the old wretch set up such cries and lamentations, offering me a purse of gold pieces, which he pulled from under his rags, if I would let him take the beast with him, that I began to suspect that there was something more in the sacks than chopped straw. Sure enough, their weight betrayed the secret. In the mouth and along the sides there was nothing but straw, but in the middle they were filled with bright gold pieces, all of the temple coinage. Here is the old man and his treasure."

So saying the Centurion thrust forward Ananus, the son of Caiaphas — for the old mendicant was none other than he — while at the same time the soldiers dragged the two sacks up before the general, and emptied their glittering contents on the ground at his feet.

At the sight of the gold, the soothsayer stretched out both his hands towards it. "O ye gods!" he exclaimed, "they say the omens were deceptive! And now at least ten talents<sup>1)</sup> of pure gold are laid at your feet, O Caesar! Methinks you ought to be very grateful to the gods, and to their minister who foretold the good luck awaiting you!"

"It is not mine, it does not belong to me, as I live, it is part of the treasure of the temple," cried Ananus, almost beside himself at the sight of the gold, the idol he worshipped. What had he not done in order to acquire possession of Rabbi Sadoc's wealth! What had he not done to conceal his father's debts! What risks had he not incurred for the sake of getting at least a part of his ill-gotten gains to some place of safety! And now he saw all cast at the feet of the detested Roman, and he howled with rage and despair.

Titus saw through him. "It is the gold of the temple," he said, "and you have stolen it. Crucify him! Crucify him and every one of his confederates! I have shown quite enough leniency to this town, too much in fact. Henceforth it shall make experience of the true Roman virtue, inflexible severity. Take them all away and nail them to the crosses at once, before the walls of Jerusalem!"

"My lord, there are eight hundred of them! Wherever are we to find wood to make so many crosses!" the Centurion ventured to say.

"Hang up a couple of them at a time, one before and one behind. And if all the timber is cut down about here, bring it from a distance, however far you may have to go for it. We shall want timber also for the new banks, which are to be commenced tomorrow. Take them away, to the cross with them. And give the place of honor to this sacrilegious thief."

Ben Caiaphas burst into insane laughter, more unpleasant to hear than his former lamentations. "Crucify him, crucify! What a joke! That is the cry we raised, when I was a young fellow not more than twenty years old, and we forced Pontius Pilate to put the Nazarite to death. But give me just a handful of gold, only one or two pieces—"

<sup>1)</sup> About £6,500.

A roar of laughter from the rude soldiery drowned the piteous accents of the speaker, who was dragged away with the others to be scourged and crucified.

Titus reentered his tent. Lucius and Benjamin, standing within, had witnessed what had occurred. The boy wanted to throw himself at the General's feet, and implore him to pardon the man, at whose hand he had once suffered such cruel treatment. But Lucius restrained him. "It is no use now," he said. "Titus is too much irritated by the losses he has sustained; when he has calmed down a little, I will try if I can persuade him to show mercy."

This Lucius did, but to no purpose. The austere Roman was not to be touched. The increasing horrors of famine daily induced many to leave the city, often five hundred or even more. They were all crucified. The crosses stood in long rows in the valley of Josaphat, alongside the brook Cedron, and on the hills to the west and south; the unhappy victims were nailed or bound to them in all imaginable positions by the soldiery.

When Lucius expostulated with Titus about this cruelty, he answered that he permitted it in the hope that the sight might perhaps induce the Jews to surrender. Besides, the soldiers engaged in hard labor, needed some diversion to take the place of the amphitheatre and circus. It was not his intention to lend his ear to these newfangled christian ideas, but to carry on the war in the old Roman fashion, and therefore he forbade any further objections being raised to his decisions.

Thus the tribune was reluctantly compelled to desist from any further attempt to intercede on behalf of the unfortunate Jews. "How stern and unfeeling paganism renders every man of good and noble sentiments, like Titus, who is called the darling of mankind," he said to Benjamin. "We see how needful it was that the Son of God should bring the religion of charity, of mercy down from heaven to earth."

Benjamin could not understand how anyone could be so cruel. He fell at Titus' feet and besought him to have compassion on the crowds of prisoners. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," he said

with tears in his eyes to the General. Titus commended the boy for his courage in pleading for his country-people, but refused impatiently to listen to him. "I want no mercy shown me, either by gods or men," he proudly asserted. "I do justice, and if I do not merit fame and success, let the gods withhold it from me. I am not going to obtain it by begging. Go away child, and let me hear no more of these absurd Christian doctrines. Remember that I am a Roman."

Lucius and Benjamin did not trouble Titus with any more petitions. But the sentries often informed their commander that they might be seen at night going the round of the crucified sufferers, giving them water to quench their thirst, while the boy spoke to them in their own tongue; and sometimes it seemed as if the tribune even poured water on their heads.

"Let them alone," Titus answered to the centurion who gave him this information. And to himself he said: "What strange people these Christians are! I wonder whether this religion, which makes men so weak and soft-hearted, will ever make proselytes of our posterity. If so, what will become of the Roman empire."

#### Note to Chapter 46.

Page 535.—The deserters used to swallow pieces of gold and jewels in order to save them. When this artifice became known, the unfortunate men were cut open, and their bowels searched for these treasures. Josephus ascribes these barbarities to the Syrian and Arabian mercenaries, adding: "No misery befel the Jews more miserable than this; since in one night about 2,000 of these deserters were thus dissected." (Wars V, 13, 4.)

Page 536.—Concerning the crucifixion of the prisoners Josephus says: "The severity of the famine forced them at last to depart out of the city. If they were taken they defended themselves for fear of being punished; and after they had fought, they thought it too late to make any supplications for mercy; so they were first scourged and then tormented with all sorts of tortures before they died, and were then crucified before the wall of the city. This miserable procedure made Titus greatly to pity them, for they caught five hundred Jews every day, and some days even more. . . The soldiers, out of hatred and wrath they bore the Jews nailed those they caught, one after one way and one after another to the crosses by way of jest; their multitude was so great that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies." (V. 11, 1.)

## CHAPTER 47.

### The Council of War.

In the beginning of June, Titus gave orders to build a wall all round the city. The length of this wall was thirty-nine furlongs, (about five miles) at intervals of three furlongs a square tower was erected, so that when the whole was completed, there were thirteen of these forts, the breadth of which added ten furlongs to the length of the whole, making it up to between six and seven English miles. It was constructed with the stones of the walls and houses that had been demolished. Considering its great length, it is difficult to believe, as Josephus asserts, that this work was finished in three days.<sup>1)</sup>

Titus put garrisons in the thirteen forts, and the intervening spaces were patrolled by detachments of armed men; the General and the superior officers going in turn round the walls by night to observe how the watch was kept.<sup>2)</sup>

By this arrangement, every possibility of introducing supplies into Jerusalem was precluded, and the misery caused by the famine reached its climax. The inhabitants died of starvation by hundreds. It had long since become impossible to inter the dead bodies, they were thrown out of the gates, or cast down from the rocky heights into the valleys below. Out of one gate alone no fewer than 115,880 corpses were carried between the 14th April and 1st June, as the keeper of the gate himself testified. Josephus estimates the entire number of bodies that were thrown out at six hundred thousand.<sup>3)</sup> When they could no longer be carried out, they were laid in heaps in the empty houses, and shut up; thus the city became a huge sepulchre, full of rottenness and

<sup>1)</sup> Wars of the Jews, V. 12, 2.

<sup>2)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3)</sup> Wars of the Jews, V, 13, 7.

putrefaction. And the burning rays of an eastern sun beat upon it all day long, from a sky that spread above like a shield of glowing brass.

Sometimes the Romans thought no one was left alive in Jerusalem, such was the profound silence that reigned within the walls. Yet day by day the smoke of the daily sacrifice was seen to ascend from the temple, and the sound of the trumpet duly proclaimed the commencement of the Sabbaths and festivals. And if the Romans dared to approach near to the walls or towers, a hundred warriors started up on the ramparts, and assailed the enemy with a volley of darts, contemptuously rejecting every invitation to surrender.

At length the middle of July was reached. One evening, at the close of one of those glowing days which followed one another in endless succession, Titus returned to the camp with a gloomy expression on his countenance. "We must put an end to this business," he said to Lucius Flavius, "or the pestilence will drive us from the vicinity of this god-forsaken city."

"The new banks are already so far advanced that in a few days the battering-rams can be brought into play," the tribune answered.

"To be again swallowed up in the ground and burnt to ashes!" the General rejoined.

"I do not think so," Lucius replied. "We have undertaken counter-operations, and today we succeeded in undermining one of the gigantic stones of the foundation. I was on the spot myself, and could not hear the besieged at work on either side, although I put my ear to the ground."

"So much the better; we will delay no longer. As soon as a breach is made, if only wide enough for one man to force his way through, we will soon be through the gap. You shall head the scaling-party, as I promised you."

At that moment a centurion entered, to say that a troop of horsemen were approaching from Gophna, in the midst of which an Amazon was to be seen.

"That is Berenice," Titus exclaimed. "Come Lucius, we will ride out to meet her."



Lucius, who since the commencement of the siege had attended the General in the capacity of adjutant, could hardly refuse to accompany him on this occasion, distasteful as it was to him to do so. He therefore followed Titus, who having called for his purple mantle and gilt helmet, mounted a richly-caparisoned charger, and rode out of the Decumana Gate. As he passed through, he gave orders to prepare a splendid reception for the Princess.

As soon as Berenice caught sight of the General, she galloped forward somewhat in advance of her escort, to greet him. "Did you ever see a more beautiful, a more magnificent woman!" Titus said to Lucius, who was at his side. "Look how well she sits her horse, how well the golden breast-plate, the glittering helmet on her floating locks, become her style of beauty."

Lucius was glad that Titus put spurs to his horse, and without awaiting an answer, hastened forward to meet the Princess. He followed at a short distance, and remarked how Titus, with the ease of a consummate horseman, wheeled his charger round to Berenice's side and gave her his hand. The tender glance, the bewitching smile wherewith she welcomed the Emperor's son, did not escape his observant eye.

"Now that Minerva has come," he heard the General say. "Mars must surely be victorious."

"Ares the destroyer can conquer without the aid of Pallas Athene," she laughingly rejoined.

"I am not so sure of that. Force must combine with wisdom if victory is to be obtained."

"I imagined that you had as good as conquered, and I came not so much to aid the combatant as to crown the victor, and," she added, lowering her voice, "to receive from him a crown in exchange for the wreath; you know, when you place the circlet on my brow, it must be by the light of the flames that consume Jerusalem."

As she uttered these words Berenice looked in Lucius' direction; she instantly recognized him, and a shade of embarrassment was discernible in her manner. However she merely acknowledged the military salute of her former favorite with a distant bow, and behaved as if

she had never seen him before. The tribune was well content that she should meet him as a stranger, and he held himself as far aloof from the two princely personages as military etiquette permitted.

"At any rate, my dear Titus," Berenice went on, "you must allow me to present myself before you as a suppliant on behalf of my dear native land. Of course it is only just and right that you should make war on those miserable rebels, and annihilate them. But what has the country done that your soldiers should devastate it in this manner? I really do not know it again; for about ninety furlongs<sup>1)</sup> my way has lain through a tract of country of which the whole aspect is utterly changed. Judea, that I love so well, more especially the immediate environs of Jerusalem, were once a very paradise, fair and fertile. On all sides one saw pleasant gardens, country-houses, vineyards, olive-groves, fig-trees and pomegranates laden with fruit, well-wooded heights, shady walks and plantations, smiling meadows and picturesque hamlets. Now all is laid waste! The houses are demolished, the trees and shrubs are all cut down.<sup>2)</sup> One might fancy oneself in the desert sooner than in the land God has blessed, the land once flowing with milk and honey."

"What you say is only too true," Titus replied. "I am very sorry for it myself, but your obstinate fellow-countrymen compel me to act in this way. They burnt my entrenchments, and now my soldiers have had to cut down the trees for a radius of ninety furlongs to get timber for the new works, which are now finished. Well, peace must restore what war has destroyed. But there are worse horrors which you will have to witness. It is reckoned that there are half a million unburied corpses, which lie rotting beneath this fiery sun. And by the gods! I really think the stench of them is perceptible here."

Berenice turned pale, and said: "It is so, I noticed it, but I did not know what it was. However I was quite prepared for something of the kind, and Elpis has

<sup>1)</sup> Between eleven and twelve miles.

<sup>2)</sup> Josephus, VI, 1.

brought oil of spikenard and some other choice perfumes for you. Take my handkerchief, the scent on it is still wet."

"And make myself a laughing-stock to all my soldiers! Many thanks for your kind thoughtfulness; for two whole months I have been exposed to the stench, although I must own, it gets more intolerable every day. But really, though I am delighted to see you here, you had better go back to Gophna. The spectacle presented by the walls of Jerusalem is not one for women to see; it is bad enough for men. Nothing but putrefying corpses everywhere! I will contrive to see if I can pay you a visit now and again in Gophna."

"Not a sight for women, you say," rejoined Berenice pouting. "You mean ordinary women, I suppose; you forget that the future consort of a hero has nerves of steel."

"What an actress the woman is!" Lucius said to himself.

"Just as you please. I am only afraid lest it should make you ill. At least hold your perfumed handkerchief to your face," Titus answered.

The camp was reached by this time. At the Porta Decumana the superior officers, amongst them Antiochus of Commagene, and other commanders of the auxiliary forces, were awaiting the General and his affianced bride, and the musicians received them with a fanfare of trumpets. The broad pathway leading through the centre of the camp was lined with soldiers, who greeted the distinguished visitor with acclamations and a military salute. The haughty Amazon in her gilded coat-of-mail drew herself up to her full height, and made the elegant Arab mare she rode keep pace to the time of the military music. She had long since put away her scented handkerchief, lest the soldiers should think her effeminate. As she was riding through the camp a light breeze from the south sprang up, wafting more strongly the sickening odor of putrefaction over from the city. Berenice's smile became more forced, the color faded from her cheeks, and just as she drew rein before the splendid tent which had been hastily erected to serve

as a state-room for the use of the Queen, beside the General's tent, she uttered a faint cry, and fell from her horse in a swoon.

Lucius had foreseen this. Generously suppressing the movement of gratification which he could not help feeling in the humiliation of this proud woman, he sprang to her side at the right moment, and caught her in his arms as she fell, so that she did herself no harm.

The mocking laughter of the soldiers rang in Berenice's ears as she slowly recovered consciousness under the care of her slaves in the tent prepared for her. The Roman soldiery could not endure this Jewess, and the fact that their adored Commander should pay court to her instead of wooing some noble Roman lady for his bride, was a cause of great dissatisfaction to them. The sternest rebukes from Titus could not on this occasion silence the coarse jests of the men concerning what they called the Jewish perfumes. Even the superior officers indulged in scornful remarks, and the grave Cerealis said aloud, loud enough for Titus to overhear: "It serves her quite right. What do we want with women in a Roman camp?"

Berenice was intensely mortified by this humiliation, the more so because she did not fail to perceive that the mocking shouts of the soldiers had put Titus out of humor. He insisted upon her returning to Gophna the next morning with an escort. But such was her vanity, that she set her heart on letting the troops see that she was able to overcome the little weakness to which she had momentarily succumbed, and she therefore begged Titus to allow her to be carried round the camp in a litter, and himself to accompany her.

But the General negatived this proposal most decidedly. Then as if to atone for his somewhat curt reply, he added in a gentler tone: "Not that I doubt your courage, only I cannot waste a single hour now. Do you not hear the thundering and thumping? That is the voice of the battering-rams calling on the Antonia to surrender. The walls are undermined in several places, and therefore I hope that in spite of its strength, it will soon give way and we can venture to storm it."

"Oh, I must see that! I would give anything once to see a real pitched battle! That must be something very different to the fighting of professional gladiators in the amphitheatre. You must not treat me as if I were a child, and send me away to Gophna when such a famous spectacle is to be seen here. I must, I will see it. Besides you do not yet know the real reason that induced me to come hither all the way from Caesarea. Of course the primary motive was to see you—for three whole months I have been longing for the sight of your dear face.—But in addition to that, I wanted to ask something of you, something which I have very, very much at heart. If you love me, you will not refuse my request. I believe I mentioned it to you once before, but you may have forgotten it."

"Well, what is your request? You know I should be most happy to grant anything, provided it is in accordance with reason and duty," Titus replied rather impatiently.

"Reason and duty! Those are such cold, horrid words!" Berenice replied with a pout. "Of course what I am going to ask is perfectly reasonable. It is that you will preserve the glorious temple from destruction. You see it was built by my ancestor, Herod the great, and its destruction would diminish the renown of our house. Now I thought it would sound so well if the historian recorded the fact that I had interceded with you for it, and you had spared it out of love for me. Look, dearest Titus, the temple would thus become a monument immortalising our love, and I would have a marble tablet let into the wall by every gate, proclaiming the glory of your name and our mutual affection in three different languages to all posterity. Now tell me if that is not reasonable."

Titus laughed, and said: "No one can deny that you have a most persuasive tongue. If your arguments do not convince the reason you know very well how to appeal to the heart and the feelings. Unfortunately, in respect to the latter we Romans are less richly endowed than you Orientals. I have called a meeting of the legates and the commanders of the auxiliary forces to

meet in my tent an hour hence, that I may hear what they think about the fate of the temple. Would you like to plead your cause before them, or shall I be your mouthpiece?"

"Would you have me address those barbarians who jeered at me yesterday, and are quite capable of making me the butt of their raillery again today?" retorted Berenice with an offended air. "No, it is to my Titus that I appeal. You understand me, and it is for you to decide upon the fate of the temple. If you think fit to ask those men about it, tell them your reasons. Only do not mention me. They might even insist upon the destruction of the temple merely to spite me."

When Titus quitted the royal visitor's tent, he noticed a band of soldiers making a great clamor about a prisoner, whom, as it appeared, they were dragging along from the *Porta Decumana*. The soldiery were greatly infuriated on account of the severe losses the army had sustained, and the extraordinarily obstinate resistance they encountered, and in a great many instances they had cruelly tortured the Jews whom they had taken prisoners, and put them to death untried and uncondemned. They were apparently about to proceed to the same lengths with this man, in open day, and in the camp itself, into the precincts of which they had brought him. "What occasion is there to take him to Titus first? He has other work to do than to send an old Jew to the gallows!" the General overheard the men say.

"What need for examination and sentence?" another voice cried.

"Look at the pouchful of gold that is strapped around his waist. We will relieve him of it, and nail him up to the nearest cross, he will not want it there."

Such were the words that fell on Titus' ear, as he emerged from the tent. In another instant he faced the soldiers, and addressed them in tones that made them slink away in no slight trepidation.

An old man, of venerable aspect and good height and figure, rose slowly from the ground along which the brutal soldiery had pulled him by his clothes. He wiped away the blood that trickled down his brow, and

with eastern courtesy, knelt before the officer whose interference had unquestionably saved his life, bowing his head to the dust in token of his gratitude. "May the God of my fathers reward you for rescuing me," he said. "I come from Pella, on the other side of the Jordan, not from Jerusalem, as these men of war imagine, who cannot understand either Hebrew or Greek, and in their ignorance were on the eve of staining their hands with the blood of the innocent. I desired an interview with the noble Titus, the son of the Emperor Vespasian; I have with me letters from the Quaestor Quirinus, showing me to be a peaceful citizen, one who is by no means in league with the party of the seditious in Jerusalem."

"Rise up then, and come into my tent, I am Titus."

On hearing this, the aged man once more bowed his grey head to the ground, ejaculating: "Then may the Lord, who turns the hearts of men like the streams of water, move your heart to receive my petition graciously." He rose up, and was following the General to his tent, when on reaching the open space before it, his eye fell upon the temple, a view of which was first discernible from this spot on the road from Samaria. And when he beheld the sanctuary of God in all its ancient glory and splendor, and noticed the cloud of incense, betokening the offering of the daily sacrifice, rising gently and spreading above the gleaming golden roof, he forgot that he was in the Roman camp, in the presence of the Roman General; tears started to his eyes, and raising his hands to heaven, he fell upon his knees, exclaiming: "O Lord, Thou who art enthroned above the cherubim, and who hast chosen Sion for Thy dwelling-place, let the light of Thy countenance shine once more upon Thy sanctuary, and cast not Israel off for ever!"

Titus turned and looked at the worshipper with a certain feeling of reverence. "I never saw one of our priests praying to Jupiter after this fashion—yet the God of the Jews does not grant their supplications! They must have transgressed grievously against Him. One is almost tempted to believe the fable which says they crucified His Son." Such were the thoughts that

the sight of the Jew's devotion suggested to the mind of the stern Roman.

Just at that moment, Benjamin came out of the tent, and slipped by the General. When he caught sight of the stranger, he opened his eyes wide, and with a cry of delight rushed up to him, as he rose from his knees.

"Father, Father," he exclaimed.

"O Benjamin! Son of my right hand! Light of mine eyes! Darling of my heart! Praised be the Lord who has given thee at least back to me!" The old man cried in his delight, lifting the boy in his arms, pressing him to his breast and kissing him with tears of joy.

In the happiness of meeting again, both at first forgot that the General was a witness of the scene. Then the boy led his father to Titus, and explained the relationship between them.

The Rabbi began to apologize, but Titus said kindly: "I congratulate you, and I take your meeting with your son as a good omen for myself, that I too may return in joy to my father. Really in this unhappy war one seems to lose all feelings of humanity! You will doubtless like to be together for a time; afterwards bring your father to me, Benjamin, that I may hear his petition, and grant it, if possible."

"O noble lord, even the joy of the present moment will be turned to gall and wormwood if you do not grant my prayer," Sadoc said. "If you would consummate our happiness, hear me at once, and give me a favorable answer."

"Just as you please. Step into my tent, then, and tell me what you want. Only be brief; I have no time to spare."

Rabbi Sadoc's entreaty was that the temple might be spared. The words he uttered came from his inmost heart, and as he spoke the tears rolled down his cheeks. Genuine emotion never fails to touch those who are themselves not destitute of good feeling, and Titus, despite his Roman inflexibility, had great nobility of character. "What an attachment these Jews have to the temple of their God," he said to himself. "I saw no tears shed over the destruction of the holy place of



our people, when, some months ago, in the war with Vitellius, the Roman capitol was burnt down with the statues of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva."

The offer with which the Rabbi concluded his supplication, was not needed in order to dispose the General to accede to it. "I will hand over to you," he said, "three-quarters of all that I possess, a hundred talents of Attic silver, if you will preserve the house of our God from ruin, and the blessing of our nation shall rest upon you and your descendants from generation to generation, the prayers and sacrifices of our priests shall be offered on your behalf."

Titus answered: "Your request entirely coincides with my own wishes and with those of a dear friend. The sum you offer is not, moreover to be despised as an indemnity for the costs of the war your nation has brought upon Rome. But before I can speak decidedly on so weighty a matter, I must hear what my legates have to say about it. In an hour's time I will let you know my decision."

Rabbi Sadoc accordingly left the tent, outside of which Benjamin was waiting for him. The boy took his father to the ramparts and showed him the small house in the distance, over which the white doves were still hovering, and where he thought Tamar was yet living. The Rabbi called down the blessing of Heaven upon his daughter. Even when he heard that his children had become Christians, he did not display as much displeasure as Benjamin had expected. The tidings was not altogether unexpected, and while at Pella, he had learnt to know something more about the Christians.

For his own part he had not the slightest intention of accepting their doctrines, but he was inclined to recognise them as a sect of the Jews like the Saducees, since they worshipped in the temple and in all main points kept the Jewish law. What most repelled him, was Christ's prophesy concerning the destruction of the temple. The fulfilment of that prediction must be prevented at any cost; and for this end he had come to Titus, and offered him the greater part of his substance for the preservation of the sanctuary. Evidently Titus

was favorably inclined and consequently Sadoc confidently told his son that the temple would be left standing and the prophecy proved false. "Then you and Thamar will see," he said, "that your Jesus was no true prophet, much less the Son of God and the Messiah; you will return to the law of Moses and I shall offer a sacrifice of praise, of thanksgiving and of propitiation to the Lord in His holy temple for your conversion."

Benjamin put his fingers to his ears when he heard his father speak in this way of Jesus, and said: "O, Father, may the all-merciful God forgive your blasphemy! The Saviour's words will quite certainly be fulfilled about the temple, as they have been about everything else. Did he not say that the enemies of Jerusalem would build a wall around her? Who would have thought that possible with so large a city? Yet look at the wall with its many towers. Titus raised it in a few days."

Rabbi Sadoc was undeniably somewhat staggered at what his boy said. Yet he clung with truly Jewish obstinacy to his assertion that the temple would be preserved and his children would be convinced of their error.

Meanwhile Titus held a council of war. Briefly and clearly he laid before the assembled officers the reasons for and against the destruction of the temple, letting them see very plainly that he was not averse to sparing it, provided this could be reconciled with the weal of the State.

The commanders of the auxiliaries, who were first asked to give their opinion, had gathered from the General's speech what his wishes were on the subject, and with outspoken eulogiums of his clemency voted for the preservation of this, one of the wonders of the world.

The leaders of the legions on the contrary were strongly opposed to this policy. First and foremost in urging the destruction of the sanctuary was the Apostate Tiberius Alexander. With heated and passionate language he declared that this sacrifice was requisite for the good of the State. The Jewish people must cease to be a nation apart in the Roman empire, and as long as the temple was standing, it formed the focus of their individuality, and the fusion of races was not to be thought

of. Religion had been at the root of all the insurrections that had hitherto been made by the Jews, and it must be exterminated by the destruction of the temple and the abolition of the daily sacrifice. Besides in every rebellion of the Jews, the temple formed an almost impregnable fortress, while the taxes which were levied for the maintenance of divine worship provided the priests with the means of carrying on war against Rome. Let the temple therefore be done away with, and the drachmas paid into the imperial treasury, that the Jews might become Romans in heart and soul, as he himself was.

Thus Tiberius Alexander uttered his opinion, and Cerealis, Placidus, Sextus Lepidus, Titus Frigius, Eternius Fronto and the other officers agreed with him. Flavius Josephus did not venture to express any opinion; he would leave it, he said, to the wise and merciful Caesar to do as he deemed best. If the good of the Roman empire required the demolition of the temple he would consent to the sacrifice, deeply as it pained him. But if Titus thought it possible to spare so glorious a structure without injury to the public interest, he would proclaim to all posterity the divine clemency of the General.

Titus turned away with disgust from the honied words of this sycophant. Addressing Lucius Flavius, he inquired what he thought on the subject?

"It is no use for us to come to any determination about it, for the temple will be destroyed whatever your decision may be," the Christian tribune replied.

"How so? Do you mean that I have resolved upon its destruction beforehand, and shall pay no heed to the counsel of the officers I have called together for consultation? What you say is nothing short of offensive," Titus rejoined with a frown on his brow.

"What I mean is this: that the temple will be destroyed, so completely that not one stone will be left upon another, even if you yourself and all who are assembled here decide upon its preservation. Jesus of Nazareth, whom I, as you are aware, adore as the Son of God, foretold its destruction, and His words will be fulfilled. Our army, its brave commanders, you yourself, exalted Caesar, all the forces of Rome are only here to carry out the prediction of the Son of God."

For a few moments all present stared in silence at Lucius, who spoke with the utmost calmness and assurance. Then a burst of indignation broke out; and Tiberius Alexander exclaimed: "I know the Galilean predicted that; he was astute enough to foresee that the destruction of the temple was essential to the peace of the Roman empire."

Titus imposed silence on the assembly. Turning to Lucius, he said: "Then if the temple remains standing and the word of your supposed God is not fulfilled, the Christians will be forced to admit that they have given credence to a false prophet?"

"If but one prophesy which his lips uttered prove untrue, He cannot be God," the tribune quietly rejoined.

The General stood up, and with flaming eyes and uplifted right hand he cried aloud: "By Jupiter, the greatest and highest of the gods! that decides me! The preservation of the temple means the downfall of the Christian religion, which I consider far more dangerous to the State than the Jewish. Its Founder will be branded as an imposter, therefore its fall is certain, and the religion of the Jews will be involved in its ruin. For if the sanctuary itself is spared, all the bulwarks surrounding it shall be done away with, and the temple taxes shall be paid into the imperial treasury. Heralds shall proclaim my orders to the legions. The temple shall be left standing; that is my last word."

Note to Chapter 47. Page 538.

It seems scarcely credible that such a work could be accomplished in *three days*; one would imagine that it should rather be three weeks. That was about the time (seventeen days) that it took the soldiers to raise the banks for the siege, and these were not to be compared with the wall of circumvallation which was some six miles in length. Josephus endeavors to account for the shortness of the time in which it was completed by the extraordinary zeal and energy the soldiers displayed; he says: "There came now upon the soldiery a certain divine fury, so that not only did one legion vie with another, but the lesser divisions of the army did the same. Insomuch that each soldier was ambitious to please his decurion, each centurion his tribune, and the ambition of the tribunes was to please their superior commanders, while Caesar himself took notice of and rewarded the like contention in those commanders." (Wars of the Jews, V. 11, 2.)

## CHAPTER 48.

### The Conquest of the Antonia.

The commanders had not yet left Titus' presence, when messengers came to announce that a large number of Jews had made a sortie, with the object of setting fire to the fortifications and the engines employed in the siege. Titus instantly issued the command that the whole army should turn out to defend the works. "If the enemy succeeds in casting fire-brands into our fascines, I know not where we should get materials to construct them anew. Let the men make a rampart for them with their own bodies, and let any one who quits the ranks be put to death!"

After giving these orders Titus hastened himself to the place of peril. His presence was not needed to stimulate the soldiers in the performance of their duty; they knew what labor the erection of the new fortifications had cost them, and how much depended on preserving them. They placed themselves like a wall on each side of the works, warding off the fire-brands with their shields, whilst their comrades in serried ranks charged the enemy. The Jews fought with the valor of despair, yet they could not succeed in getting any advantage or setting fire to one of the embankments, on which were fixed the battering-rams which, while the fighting went on around, continued to thunder without intermission at the walls. At length the Galileans and the Zealots were forced to retire, leaving hundreds of wounded and dead upon the field.

From the monument of John the High-priest Titus beheld with satisfaction the success the soldiers gained, and as the cohorts returned to their position he saluted them, commending by name any individuals who had displayed special prowess. All of a sudden he perceived Berenice's litter making its way through the troops to the spot where he stood. The royal lady's request then flashed into his mind, too late.

She greeted him rather ungraciously. "Titus," she said, "you know how urgently I entreated you to take me with you into the battle!" The perfumes that rose from the litter were almost overpowering.

"I beg pardon, fair Princess," he answered carelessly, "in war a General must obey the call of duty before the rules of courtesy or even the promptings of love."

As he spoke a messenger came up, saying: "General, the wall is tottering!"

"Hail Mars, the demolisher of fortresses," exclaimed Titus, adding as he turned to Berenice: "Do not venture any nearer to the tower of Antonia! You can see all that goes on from here, without incurring any risk. — Lucius Flavus, now is the time to be as good as your word. Call up the first division of the fifth legion and place yourself at their head. When the wall gives way, you must surmount the ruins and enter the breach as quick as thought."

Without paying any more attention to Berenice, Titus hastened to the spot where the battering-rams were at work, in order to incite the men to redoubled energy. The heavy iron ram-heads beat in regular time on the shattered stones. The wall began to groan and crack in an ominous manner, and Titus had hardly time to utter a cry of warning before a large portion gave way and fell in ruins with a deafening noise. A shout of exultation rose from the spectators, which was echoed by the legions drawn up at a distance in rank and file. Berenice clapped her hands in applause, as she was accustomed to do in the circus, but the act passed unheeded amid the roar of sixty-thousand voices.

The stones were still rolling down the declivity, and a cloud of dust still filled the air when Lucius drawing his sword, dashed through the breach, shouting to his men: "Follow me, brave Romans!" But the Jews, far from being intimidated, received him with mocking laughter and a volley of darts.

"Stay, Tribune," exclaimed a decurion, by name Sabinus, rubbing his eyes to clear them from the dust. "These devils have built a second wall, while our battering-rams were demolishing the first."

So it was in truth. In the three weeks, during which the Romans were engaged in raising the banks, John of Gischala and his party had constructed another and no less massive wall at a short distance from the first. And the ground was so encumbered with heaps of debris, not to speak of the portions of masonry still standing, that it appeared impossible to bring the battering-rams to bear upon it.

"Bring the ladders," Lucius cried, standing fearlessly with about a dozen men in the breach, holding his shield aloft to protect his head from the missiles that rained upon him.

The heavy scaling ladders were laboriously dragged over the ruins and planted against the wall; their iron tips rang as they struck upon the ramparts. In an instant Lucius placed his foot upon the rungs and began to ascend, covering himself with his shield. Arrows, javelins and stones fell about him; the Jews tried to throw the ladder down, but, commending himself to God and his good angel, the intrepid tribune mounted higher and higher. The decurion Sabinus climbed the bastion after him, but just as he attained the summit, he stumbled upon a large stone and fell headlong to the ground. This accident damped the soldiers' courage to such an extent that no one dared to follow his example; in fact almost all who began to climb the ladder fell back dead or wounded. So they shouted to Lucius to save himself; and really no alternative was left him but either to surrender to the enemy, who confronted him in vast numbers, or to descend the ladder, apparently a yet more hazardous enterprise than ascending it. However he took the latter course, and contrary to all expectation reached the ground in safety.

Titus witnessed this daring feat with astonishment, and hastened to bring assistance to Lucius in person, for no one in the whole army outdid the General in courage. He came too late; the enemy had come up in such numbers, that it would have been madness to attempt a second assault. So nothing remained to be done but to extol the bravery of the tribune, and rebuke the soldiers for not supporting him when victory seemed so near.

"We will have our revenge for this repulse, Caesar," the men replied.

Lucius had devised another scheme for the conquest of Mount Sion in case the assault failed, that of making his way into the fortress by means of a subterranean passage. When Titus had betaken himself to his tent for the night, Lucius woke his old comrade in arms, the decurion Martius, and laid his plan before him. Martius shook his grey head, and said that all his life he had been averse to these underhand ways, and preferred a free fight in open day. Yet, if Lucius really thought that the tunnel would afford them the means of taking the enemy in the rear, and making themselves masters of the fortress, he would consent to make the attempt in spite of his years. The troops under his command would be willing to go with him, and he believed that his friends, decurions Loricatus and Gladiolus, could easily persuade their men to join the expedition.

"Well, three brave decurions and thirty Roman soldiers are more than enough for our undertaking," Lucius rejoined. "If my conjectures are right, and we can make our way through the passage under the walls to the gallery whereby our first embankments were destroyed, our success is assured. The tunnel must have its issue either in the Antonia or in the court of the temple, and it will be easy to take the sentinels by surprise, as no attack will be thought of from such a quarter. Then we will call to our outposts and hold our ground until they scale the walls and come to our assistance."

"I will take a bugle with me for the purpose," the decurion said.

"Whatever you do, mind you do not forget the spades and pickaxes! We shall want them most of all, for according to my reckoning, we shall have to excavate some twenty yards or so at the foot of the wall before coming to the passage already made."

"I will see to all that, Tribune. In an hour's time we will all be ready at the entrance of the tunnel," Martius answered.

He was good as his word. Lucius gave the watchword to the guards who were stationed at the entrance.



Moreover he was well-known to the soldiery, who had often seen him in the General's company. Consequently they let him pass without hesitation.

The lanterns were lighted, and the little band soon reached the end of the subterranean gallery. There they found the way blocked to a certain measure, as Lucius had anticipated, by the falling in of the stones that had been undermined, but the huge blocks which formed the foundations had fallen crosswise, so as to leave sufficient room on each side to pass by.

"If we only find it the same with the old gallery, which as I surmise is only a few feet to our right!" Lucius said, as he gave orders to shovel out the earth parallel with the wall.

"Would it not be better to make a passage on the inner side of the wall?" Martius asked. "The gallery may be blocked on the other side by the weight of the ruins."

"Yes, if we do not come across some wall at right angles on the inside," Lucius answered, after a moment's reflection. "Let us hope that we shall not. In fact the weight of the ruins might endanger our safety in the passage we must excavate. You are right, Martius; let it be made on the innerside."

All set to work with a good will. A passage was made wide enough to allow of the men creeping through on hands and knees; two shovelled out the earth, the others carried it in baskets to a distance. Fortune favored Lucius' scheme; they met with no obstacle and soon broke a way into the tunnel Eleazar had bored.

"Heaven be praised!" Lucius exclaimed, as last of all he crept through the aperture and stood upright. "What do you suppose the time is?"

"I should say between the second and third watches of the night," Martius replied.

"Later than that! It must be close upon daybreak," Loricatus interposed.

"If it is already light, our project must be postponed until the next night, for it would be simple madness in broad day for thirty men to attack thousands."

After a short consultation it was agreed to despatch

one man to the entrance of the gallery, to learn the hour and at the same time to let Titus know, by means of the guard, what Lucius with his handful of men was intending to do. The messenger soon returned, saying it was shortly before the third watch of the night, and the Centurion on patrol would see that the tablets reached Titus as soon as the sentries were changed.

"Excellent!" Lucius exclaimed. "That is the very best time for a surprise. Courage! Let us go forward, the citadel will be ours!"

"When once we are out of this accursed hole, so that a man can breathe freely, I shall not show the white feather," Martius said.

But the scheme of these brave warriors was destined to be frustrated to a certain extent by a wholly unforeseen incident.

The reproach which Titus addressed to the soldiers for not displaying sufficient alacrity in following Lucius when he attempted to storm the walls, rankled in their minds. On the same evening that he planned his nocturnal expedition, twenty men of the fifth legion, unaware of his design, got together, and calling to them the standard-bearer, and a trumpeter, they resolved to scale the walls, without informing any of their officers of their purpose.

About the ninth hour of the night (3 a. m.) when the weary guards had fallen asleep, they climbed over the breach, and put the sentries to death. Having thus got possession of the wall, they ordered the trumpeter to sound his trumpet, and planted the standard on the tower of Antonia. On hearing the signal the Roman outposts hastened to their comrades' assistance. John of Gischala coming up with his men, endeavored to drive them back; but it was too late, they maintained the position they had gained, and a bloody conflict commenced. Titus himself came up with his chosen men, and chased the Jews out of the fortress.

While the battle was still raging on the steps leading from the Antonia to the cloisters and the outer Court of the temple, so great a number of Jews threw themselves with desperate fury upon the small band of Romans, for

the narrowness of the place only allowed of a few being engaged at a time, that Titus himself called on his troops to withdraw into the tower.

"We can achieve nothing," he said, "until we gain more space so as to attack the enemy in front. The walls of the tower must be thrown down. Cerealis, do you with your trusty followers hold the entrance to the Temple-courts, while the others demolish the fortress. I wonder Lucius Flavus is not here, have any of you seen him?"

No one knew his whereabouts, and Titus was on the point of returning to the camp, somewhat displeased at the absence of his adjutant, when a centurion directed his attention to a handful of men, who had engaged the enemy in the rear, just before the entrance to the principal gate of the temple.

Titus looked on in astonishment for a few moments. Then he exclaimed: "Those are Romans! And by Hercules, that tall, fair young fellow, who swings his sword with such good effect, is none other than Lucius Flavus! How ever did the madcap get there? We must cut a way out for him. Follow me, we must form in the shape of a wedge and rescue our friends."

Cerealis had no little difficulty in dissuading the General from putting himself at the head of the valiant men who offered themselves for this perilous expedition. A centurion named Julian, who had won fame on account of his gigantic stature, courage and skill in war, took the lead, and rushed through the midst of the Jews. The slaughter was great; it was a hand to hand fight, and the foes pressed too close to allow other weapons than the sword to be employed. More than once it appeared a hopeless attempt to reach the other brave warriors; so many had fallen that the bodies of the dead formed a barrier between them. But Titus, who watched the struggle from the top of the tower, sent some picked swordsmen to their assistance, and at length Roman valor and martial experience proved victorious, and a way was made to enable Lucius with his sadly diminished band of followers to reach the shelter of the fortress, where they sank down in a state of complete exhaustion.

Titus loosed Lucius' breastplate with his own hands, and held to his lips the water which one of the soldiers brought in his helmet. He was perfectly amazed when he heard the account of the tribune's enterprise. They had, in their subterranean passage, heard the trumpet which gave the alarm to friend and foe, just as they reached the oaken door, wherewith Eleazar had closed the entry to the tunnel. With feverish haste they labored to remove this last obstacle, but it was too late to make their way through the crowd of Jews whom the bugle-call had aroused, and nothing would induce them to go back by the way they had come.

Lucius hoped to be able to gain possession of the nearest gate of the temple, and hold it until Titus brought up reinforcements, and thus conquer both the fortress and the temple with one stroke. But he was overpowered by numbers, and finding himself surrounded, gave up all hopes of succor in the unequal combat.

Titus commended his prowess, and promised him the rank of legate. He also promised that Lucius, and the men who had been with him that night, should occupy a place of special honor when he made his triumphal entry through the Appian Way into Rome.

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## CHAPTER 49.

### The End draws near.

Other eyes than those of Titus watched the desperate struggle in which Lucius Flavus and his men had been engaged in the courts of the temple; Eleazar and Thamar had witnessed it with keen interest.

The Zealots had carried their leader back from the spot where he fell, when after the conflagration of the intrenchments, the attack made upon the Roman camp was, owing to Lucius' prudent circumspection, repulsed though with much bloodshed. Eleazar's knee was fractured, and in the torture it caused him he cried to the soldiers to slay him as the Amalekites slew Saul. But his comrades did not think his hurt incurable, and they were anxious that the life of their valiant leader should be spared. So they bore him back to the temple and laid him in the apartment adjoining the Gasith chamber, which had been his abode.

Then they called his brother Nathaniel and Rachel his wife. But neither of these two knew how to treat so serious an injury. The stone from the Roman balista had positively crushed the right knee, and all they essayed to do for it only aggravated the intolerable pain. Eleazar drove them out of the room, and lay writhing in agony on his couch, raging at his ill-luck, cursing alike both Jew and Roman.

Rachel, at a loss what to do, went to confide her grief to Thamar. The latter did not need much persuasion to induce her to undertake the care of the man who had done her so much wrong. She only stipulated that Rachel should always remain with her when she was nursing him, and they both repaired to the chamber where he lay.

Thamar's gentle voice seemed at once to have a soothing effect on the sufferer; he allowed her to examine and wash the wound. Under Eusebius' instruction she had become a deft and skilful nurse, and knew quite

well how to bind up an ordinary wound. But in this case the first glance convinced her that the physician's hand was needed.

"Eleazar," she said, after laying a cooling compress for the time on the wound, "you are more hurt than I imagined at first."

"I know to whom I owe it. It is that fine Centurion again! Would that I could trample him under my foot as one crushes a worm! Would that he had the same fire in the marrow of his bones as I have in my knee! I only wish that cursed stone had broken my head instead my knee."

"Eleazar, the pain you are in is your excuse, but if you cannot control yourself better, I shall be compelled to leave you. I cannot and will not listen to such wild outbursts of passion. — What I meant to say was this, your wound is more serious than I thought, but not hopeless, if it is treated by a skilful physician."

"Where is one to be found?" the sufferer inquired.

"Send Nathaniel for Eusebius," Thamar rejoined. "I know his charity makes no distinction between friend and foe. If he cannot set your fractured bones, he will at any rate afford some alleviation to your pain."

At first Eleazar would not hear of this. But after he had spent a few sleepless nights in excruciating pain, he called Giezi, and bade him and Nathaniel go and fetch the Nazarite who lived in the old palace. Eusebius was perfectly willing to go to the aid of the sick man, who had made such a poor return for his former kindness. He extracted several splinters from the wound, and sent a cooling lotion and a sleeping draught, and Eleazar experienced great relief from this treatment.

To Thamar the good priest administered a different medicine, one of heavenly consolation and support, of which she stood in sore need in those troublous days. She also heard from Nathaniel that her friends in our Lady's house were as well as could be expected. Paulinus was almost well again, and his mother suffering and resigned as usual. Sara was delighted to have tidings of her foster-child, who had disappeared so mysteriously, and Rhode was cheerful as ever. The lowly

cottage seemed to be under the special protection of the Mother of God and the holy angels. For while Ben Gioras' rough bandits looted all the houses round, putting the inmates to torture for the purpose of compelling them to give up the last provisions they had left, Paulina and her household were spared these domiciliary visits, and never lacked the daily bread for which they prayed in humble confidence.

Despite all the care bestowed on him, Eleazar made no progress towards recovery. Eusebius told Thamar nothing could be done for his wound except to keep the inflammation under. There was no alternative but amputation. He bade her make every use of this opportunity to save the unhappy man from eternal death.

But when Thamar and Rachel said a word on this subject, and Eleazar perceived what they meant, he became angry and excited, and swore they should never make a Nazarite of him. Motives both of prudence and charity urged them to desist. "We shall only increase his condemnation. Perhaps it may please God to send him an hour of grace before death," Thamar said.

Thus three weeks passed by, a period scarcely more trying for the sick man than for the two women. He was enraged to hear of the progress made by the besiegers, and furious because John of Gischala would not have the new embankments undermined.

"Our walls are already undermined far too much," the Galilean answered when he was informed of Eleazar's wish.

"And yet if the embankments were destroyed the Romans would be compelled to withdraw in shame and disgrace!" Eleazar cried, grinding his teeth with rage. But John of Gischala could not be prevailed upon to alter his decision.

When the battering-rams began to thunder against the walls of the Antonia, Eleazar could no longer tolerate being confined to his chamber. He entreated that he might be carried out on to the flat roof of the northern wing of the temple, whence a view of the Antonia and the intervening fore-courts could be obtained. In vain Thamar and Rachel opposed this proposal; Eusebius having warned them that any movement of the broken

limb might be attended with most serious consequences. Yet Eleazar would not be thwarted, he persisted in his entreaty, saying even if it cost him his life he must go out to the roof of the temple.

Lusty arms lifted him up and carried him whither he wished to go, but not without causing him terrible agony.

"One would think my knee was full of molten lead," he groaned, while Thamar applied cooling lotion to it. "Give me my sleeping draught, and let the dose be so strong that I shall never wake again!"

It need not be said that Thamar did not comply with this request, but the largest dose Eusebius permitted her to administer produced no effect on the restless sufferer.

While Eleazar lay writhing in excruciating pain, the wall of the Antonia tower fell with a thundering crash. The excitement of the succeeding hours, when it was with the greatest difficulty that the wall hastily constructed by the Jews was held against the charge of Lucius' cohorts, seemed for a time to make him almost oblivious of his pain, but at night it was worse than ever. Thamar and Rachel watched by his side, and did what they could to give him ease.

It was a beautiful night. The moon was nearly full, and its large disc, rising behind the Mount of Olives shed a silvery light over the roofs and pinnacles making them look as if covered with newly-fallen snow. In the heavens all was bright and fair; but on the surface of the earth there lay a vapor, the effluvium of decaying matter, which rose from the ravines, the lanes, even from the houses, in which were thousands of corpses in every stage of decomposition. This exhalation hung like the breath of a pestilence over the city, gradually creeping up to the roof and pinnacles of the temple.

Eleazar observed it, and said with a shiver: "That is death advancing upon us."

"It will lead you to everlasting life, if you repent and believe," Thamar answered.

Eleazar did not heed her words. "What is that? What was that moving before the walls? Do you not see those figures climbing the ramparts? They are the Romans. Up, up, to arms. Oh that my voice were stronger! Thamar, Rachel, shout with me!"



At that instant the trumpet sounded and the eagle of the Roman standards glittered in the moonlight. Fighting immediately began in the Antonia; The battle cry, the clash of arms, shouts of victory, howls of fury! More and more Romans poured over the wall and drove the Jews out of the fortress.

"The Romans have taken the Antonia, and they will take the temple next if that blockhead Gischala does not look sharp. There, at last I hear our people in the court of the temple. Raise me up and push me to the edge of the battlements, that I may watch the battle. Now the archers are coming up. Give me a bow and arrows, I can quite well reach the enemy in the Antonia from here."

However after a few unsuccessful attempts he threw down the bow and the quiver. "I am no good even for that! My arm has not the strength to pull the bow and my hand shakes. O God of my fathers! To think that I must needs look on while the heathen come into Thy sanctuary."

Then Eleazar caught sight of the band of men who were coming up by the tunnel which he had made. His rage was doubled. "To think that I must needs have opened a way for the enemy to penetrate into the temple!" he cried. "A curse upon me, and the parents that gave me birth! Who is that warrior whose fair hair is seen under his glittering helmet! I know him only too well. Give me my bow and arrows again, Rachel!"

But Thamar had also recognized the warrior. Her breath came fast as she gazed at him. Then placing herself between him and Eleazar she said: "Put away those arrows. I am not going to let the man who saved my father's life be killed." And she snatched the arrows from his hand.

Eleazar, more furious because of his impotence, turned ashy white with anger. A bitter imprecation escaped his colorless lips and he sank back on his pillows.

"He is dying, he is dying," his wife exclaimed, throwing herself on her knees beside him. The end had not come yet, but a violent fit shivering seized him; it was the feverish ague which is the sure symptom of bloodpoisoning. There was no more hope for him.

Whilst the battle raged in the court below Thamar made one more attempt to inspire the dying man with faith and prepare him for baptism, for she remembered the words the Saviour spoke: He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be condemned. But all in vain: his hatred to Lucius Flavus, now extended to her, since she had interposed for his protection, seemed to exclude all hope of his acceptance of grace.

Eusebius, whom Nathaniel had hastily summoned, made his way to the roof of the temple where Eleazar lay, before the strife in the fore-courts below was ended. He found his patient in high delirium. The din of battle, the clash of arms which reached his ear from below made him fancy himself in the thick of the fray, engaged in hand-to-hand conflict with Lucius Flavus; in the delusion of his fevered brain he felled his enemy to the ground and ran him through again and again, yet ever and anon that enemy rose up anew and cleft his head with his doughty sword. And then he called to Rachel to hold his burning, aching head, and steady his hand, for Thamar always came between him and his foe so that he could not strike him through the heart.

Eusebius shook his head as he listened to the sick man's ravings. He felt his pulse, and asked the women whether he had expressed the wish, or manifested the slightest sign of a wish to receive baptism, as in that case he would baptize him conditionally.

Eleazar's nurses were obliged to admit that he had repudiated every suggestion with scorn and anger. Eusebius gave them a potion which might quiet him, and perhaps produce a brief interval of consciousness, and left them to watch and pray by his side.

Meanwhile the Romans had succeeded in withdrawing their troops behind the ramparts of the Antonia, and the Jews abandoned the attempt to re-take the fortress. Just at the decisive moment Thamar was engrossed with her patient, and consequently did not witness Lucius' rescue. She asked Nathaniel if he knew what had been the fate of the officer who had fought at the head of the Roman cohorts. Nathaniel, thinking she meant the centurion who had issued from the Antonia to succor

Lucius, answered: "He fought like a lion, but he fell, and they have thrown his body out with the others over the walls into the valley of Cedron."

The boy had not the least suspicion of the grief his words would cause Thamar. "O good Jesus!" she sighed. "I thought I had made this sacrifice long ago, and now I feel how with my whole soul I clung to Lucius! Thy will be done! He has overcome the last enemy. Call me too out of the awful misery that encompasses us on all sides."

While Thamar in her sorrow resigned herself to the will of God, fresh lamentations broke out in her immediate vicinity. The hour had come for the morning sacrifice, and hitherto the daily oblation had never been omitted. Even on this day, when the Antonia was in the hands of the enemy, thousands of worshippers had assembled for the early sacrifice. Then the Priests came out with their sacred garments rent, wearing sackcloth and with ashes on their head, and standing between the Holy of holies and the altar of sacrifice, announced to the people that the sacrifice must be discontinued since no more sacrificial victims were to be had in Jerusalem. Casting themselves on the ground they cried: "Spare O Lord, spare Thy people; deliver us not into the hands of the heathen to put us to shame."

Then from the temple and the fore-courts there arose lamentations and wailings, groans of woe and cries for help, such as never before had ascended from Mount Moria to the Courts of Heaven.

Those who were on the roof of the temple joined in the universal mourning, Christians as well as Jews, for they also prayed that the end might come, or God in his mercy send some relief in these days of tribulation. Suddenly Eleazar awoke to consciousness; perceiving the general lamentation, he cried: "What is all this about? Why are you weeping? Am I dead, and relegated to the land where eternal mourning prevails? No, I am still on the roof of the temple, and over against me I see the Roman eagle on the battlements of the Antonia—a curse upon it! Is that why you shed tears?"

Eusebius answered in a solemn voice, addressing

himself rather to the bystanders than to the sick man: "We weep, because the days have come which the Angel Gabriel foretold to Daniel the prophet at the time of the evening sacrifice: 'And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain and all the people that shall deny him shall not be his. And a people with their leader that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation . . . And in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail, and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation, and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and to the end.'"<sup>1)</sup>

"What does he mean by these prophecies of Daniel?" Eleazar asked Rachel.

"The daily sacrifice has ceased today, as the prophet foretold," she returned. "That is why we mourn and weep because now the abomination of desolation will now surely come as well. Would that on this point at least you would acknowledge your error."

"The sacrifice discontinued! The guilt of that will rest on the Romans. Punish them for it, punish him, him who never leaves off breaking my head. There he is again; out of the way, Thamar, if I only can strike him down."

"It is hopeless," Eusebius said. "The fever has come on again, he does not know what he says. We must leave him to God's mercy. And we too, my children, must prepare for death, for the end, the end the Angel predicted for the temple, cannot be far off."

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<sup>1)</sup> Daniel 9, 26, 27.

#### Note to Chapter 49.

Discontinuance of the daily sacrifice. In the text of Josephus (*Wars of the Jews* VI. 2. 1.) the cessation of the daily sacrifice is attributed to "the want of men, i. e. Priests, to offer it." However somewhat later on he records that at the time the temple was destroyed there were still many priests in Jerusalem. The correct reading of the Greek is therefore probably "the want of sacrificial victims."

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## CHAPTER 50.

### The Burning of the Temple.

It was shortly before daybreak on the 17th of July that the Romans made their successful attack on the tower of Antonia, and on the same morning for the first time the daily sacrifice was omitted. When Titus had widened the breach and undermined the foundations of the fortress, day after day sharp fighting went on, involving much loss of life, in which Roman bravery contended with Jewish desperation. As the General could not bring the whole body of his forces into the field, he had selected thirty veteran warriors of tried courage out of each cohort, thus forming a band of the *élite* of the army. Lucius, the newly appointed legate, begged to be allowed to lead this company to the assault. Titus however would not hear of this, saying he had given quite sufficient proof of his prowess, and was not to expose his life again without necessity. "Besides," he added with a smile, "you might throw a firebrand into the temple by way of helping the fulfilment of the Christian prophesy." Lucius gravely replied that he should consider it an act of sacrilege to do so. But Titus adhered to what he had said, and the command of the column of attack was entrusted to the brave Cerealis.

The Jews had demolished a considerable portion of the cloisters that joined the tower of Antonia on each side, to prevent the Romans from passing along the platform connecting the fortress with the temple and thus attacking the temple on all sides at once. Day by day Cerealis made a sally from the fortress, with a view of storming the inner walls that shut in the temple all round, the same which Eleazar and the Zealots had for a long time held against the Galilean and his followers. Soon after midnight, when the fast-waning moon had risen, the Romans began the onslaught, and the battle raged fast and furious till midday, when the intolerable

heat of the sun compelled a suspension of arms. Simon Ben Gioras had joined his troops to those of John of Gischala for the defence of the temple; Josephus relates<sup>1)</sup> that he held a scourge in his hand and beat those of his men who fell back from the fight, forcing them to return to the charge.

At length Titus succeeded, at the cost of great carnage, in penetrating to the walls of the temple, and setting his battering-rams over against the western edifice of the inner temple. But the vast size of the stones, and the strength whereby they were cemented together, baffled his efforts; the engines made no impression on them.<sup>2)</sup> With great pains, by means of cross-bars and levers, they contrived to remove the outermost stones of one gate, but that availed nothing, for the gate stood firm on the inner stones, which were out of reach. No alternative therefore remained, but to set fire to the gates, and this Titus accordingly commanded to be done, wood being piled against them. The heat of the flames melted the silver plates wherewith the cedar was overlaid, and the planks were quickly destroyed. Titus then gave orders that the burning beams should be withdrawn, and the fire quenched; the assault he postponed until the following day.

Meanwhile within the precincts of the temple consternation and perplexity, rage and despair prevailed. Multitudes flocked into the two large inner courts, and filled the approaches of the sanctuary. Not only were the Galileans there with their leader, and Ben Gioras with the most daring of his followers, but countless unhappy individuals, who, exhausted by misery and hunger, had dragged themselves thither out of the city. The majority were actuated by the hope that at length the miracle foretold by the false prophets would take place, and the Lord God Himself would come down from Heaven, to deliver His holy house and scatter His enemies. "This day you shall see the glory of the Lord in His temple!" had been the cry of the fanatic Ben

<sup>1)</sup> Wars of the Jews, VI. 2, 6.

<sup>2)</sup> Ib. VI. 4, 1.

Belga, as he strode through the streets of Jerusalem. "This day the Lord will come from the south, and our God from Mount Pharan."

And now again the prophet, his eye rolling in frenzy, reiterated his prediction in shrill, piercing tones. "Why stand ye here irresolute?" he asked the soldiers, who, speechless with horror, stood staring at the burning gates. "Now, even now, the Lord will come and take vengeance on the sacrilege which these dogs commit in His holy place. My own arm shall take vengeance, saith the Lord. I will tread the winepress alone, and trample upon mine enemies in my indignation. Their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and my apparel is red. I alone will fight against them in my wrath, my own arm shall destroy them from the face of the earth, there is none to give aid! So saith the Lord by the mouth of His servant Isaias. Wherefore lay down your arms and cast your swords from you; for the Lord Himself cometh to do battle. He cometh from Edom."

Such were the words the maniac shouted, as he edged his way amid the crowd of excited bystanders, many of whom, half beside themselves through misery and desperation, looked, some up to Heaven, others to the south, and cried: "Come, O Thou Holy One of Israel!" Then they fixed their gaze on the curtain of the Holy of holies, as if they expected to see it rent asunder, convinced as they were that something unlooked for would happen, and bring them help in this supreme hour.

The leaders of the seditious were assembled in the Gazith chamber in great agitation, unable to decide upon any course of action, mutually blaming one another for neglect or error, whereby the Romans had been enabled to obtain access into the temple by fire.

Presently Ben Gioras exclaimed, in a loud and angry voice: "Would it not be better, you fools, to discuss what must be done rather than what ought to have been done? I propose that we make a final sortie, and fight our way to the Upper city, where we shall be able to hold out for a long time. The tower of Herod stands firm, Hippicus and Phasael are impregnable. There are provisions there sufficient to last a few hundred men

for several weeks, and there is not much probability that the Romans will be able to exist longer than that in the midst of rotting corpses."

"What you would have us abandon the temple to the heathen," John of Gischala answered. "Such counsel can only come from a rogue like you, who from the very outset have only made this holy war an excuse for murder and pillage!"

"Just listen to the Galilean!" the Captain of the bandits retorted. "Who was it, pray, who stole the sacred vessels out of the treasury and melted them down?") It would serve you right to pour the molten gold down your throat! But let that pass; take your Galileans and defend the temple, which is no longer capable of defence since the Antonia was lost to us by your fault!"

"Who shall defend the temple, when the Lord Himself is its defender?" shouted Ben Belga, rushing into the Council chamber. "He will encamp about us like a devouring fire, and we shall walk uninjured amid the flames, as Ananias, Azarias and Misael in the fiery furnace at Babylon. Come, come and behold, how the Lord will appear! He will come in a chariot of fire, riding on the wings of the wind; He will come—"

"Yea, He cometh on the clouds of Heaven with much power and majesty, as He declared when He stood before my tribunal, and I rent my sacerdotal vestment, and said: He hath spoken blasphemy. Thereupon all of you cried aloud: He is worthy of death; Crucify Him!" These words were uttered by the aged Caiaphas who entered at that moment.

When the Romans set fire to the gate of the temple, Giezi, who remained in charge of the poor old madman, hastened to Eleazar's bedside, to ask whether he should not let him go free, for fear lest he should be buried beneath the ruins of the temple. Eleazar still lay, as he had lain for several days, in a state of unconsciousness, and Nathaniel, who was watching beside him, answered in his place, bidding Giezi take off his fetters and escape

<sup>1)</sup> Ib. V. 13, 6.



with him to the town. "I will see," he added, "if I cannot follow you with Tamar and Rachel. Only mind you leave the key in the trap-door leading into the subterranean passage. Eusebius says Eleazar cannot live beyond today, and as soon as he is dead, we shall leave the temple." Giezi had accordingly struck the fetters off the unhappy maniac, intending to conduct him into the city; but before he could look round the old man eluded him, and dashed up the stairs. At the top he saw the door of the chamber Gazith in front of him; the sight revived old memories and he entered the Council chamber with a stately step, in the firm belief that he was still the high-priest.

He stood, drawn up to his full height; his lofty stature, his comely head, his long snowy locks falling on to his shoulders, and his beard descending to his girdle, made him a figure worthy to be a patriarch, had not the fire of frenzy that gleamed in his blood-shot eyes proclaimed only too plainly that reason was dethroned. Drawing together the soiled and tattered remnants of his garment with a dignified gesture, as if they were the purple and scarlet of the High-priest's vestment, he walked straight up to the High-priest's chair, which stood empty, and seated himself upon it. All who were present fell back to right and left, and a sudden silence fell upon the assembly.

"What is it about which you take counsel?" the weird-looking old man inquired. "Why do you shrink from me? Where is the reverential greeting that Caiaphas was wont to receive? When was it—not long ago I am certain—that from this very seat I gave you this excellent advice: 'It is expedient that *one* man shall die, and that the whole nation perish not. Crucify him! Otherwise the Romans will come, and take away our city and our temple.' And you had the wisdom to follow my counsel; you cried aloud: 'His blood be upon us and upon our children!' Haha, how wise we all were then! If only He were not to come on the clouds of Heaven; but He will come, He will come! But we will tell no one of it; it shall be hushed up as was that tiresome story about the resurrection; we will give money

to all who see Him come on the clouds, and forbid them to tell others of it. Do you hear? That is the counsel I give you. Money, money! How can the poor Nazarite oppose the power of gold? Had He been possessed of this world's riches, we should have recognized Him as our Messiah. Listen therefore to the words of your High-priest. Why do you go away? Perhaps He is coming now, coming on the clouds of Heaven—"

Such was the fashion in which Caiaphas went on raving, growing hoarse with speaking, while the members of the Sanhedrim all went out, leaving him alone in the Council-chamber. "Lock him in," said one of the last who issued from it, "then the wretched creature cannot go about among the people any more, frightening them with the horrid things he says." So they turned the key in the lock, and left the unhappy maniac there.

"A crazy High-priest! Very suitable for a pack of madmen like these!" Simon Ben Gioras observed with a smile, as he hastened to assemble his followers round him at the eastern gate. "Let those who will make a rush for the upper city follow me," he shouted. Then he ordered the brazen gates to be thrown open, and with all his men made a furious onslaught on the Romans.

The battle that ensued was one of the fiercest that was waged throughout the whole period of the siege. The Romans received the attack standing shoulder to shoulder like a wall, covering themselves with their shields, and swerving not an inch; all about the temple resounded the shouts of war and the clangor of arms. From the top of the Antonia Titus directed the fight, and when he saw the squadron likely to give way, he sent a troop of cavalry to support them. Ben Gioras was forced to retreat to the East gate; but when the horsemen retired, he dashed out once more, and trampling over the dead and dying, fought his way with desperate energy to the bridge connecting Mount Sion with the upper city. John of Gischala and a goodly band of armed men accompanied him, while thousands preferred to remain behind and share the fate of the temple, and others, attempting to reach the bridge, were intercepted by the Romans.

To the rear of the flying foe the cohorts stormed the eastern gate of the temple, the far-famed Corinthian gate, and penetrated into the interior, putting all to the sword, without distinction of age or sex. For, as has been said, the Roman soldiery were so infuriated by the long and stubborn resistance that they showed no mercy; the bodies of the slain covered the marble pavement, and lay heaped one upon the other up to the very steps of the altar, while streams of blood flowed down into the outer court.

Whilst the Angel of Death entered through the eastern portal into the temple, on the northern side the work of destruction was carried on by fire. The soldiers were still employed in quenching the flames, which had been the means of affording them ingress through one of the silver gates, when the Jews, leaping over the burning ruins, fell upon them. This last desperate sally was made at the same time that the cohorts were storming the Corinthian gate, and it was not repulsed without considerable difficulty. Then one of the soldiers, "an instrument," as Josephus<sup>1)</sup> says, "of divine wrath, snatched a blazing log from the mass of burning material, and, lifted up by another soldier, flung it through the golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house." The flaring brand probably alighted on the store of wood, stacked there in readiness for the burnt offerings; at any rate it fell upon some inflammable substance which was speedily ignited, for red tongues of flame immediately shot up on high. With loud cries of lamentation the Jews, thinking no longer of their lives, rushed to the spot to save their temple.

This occurred on the 10th of August, when the sun was at the meridian. A messenger came running to Titus to tell him that the temple was on fire; whereupon he rose in haste and accompanied by Lucius and the other commanders, hastened to the sanctuary. Actuated some by curiosity, others by the hope of plunder, the legions followed him, with the exception of those whom military duty compelled to remain at their posts.

<sup>1)</sup> Ibid. VI. 4, 5.

"It is probably only some outbuildings," the General said to Lucius. "The massive walls of the temple itself would not catch fire so quickly. There will not be much difficulty in extinguishing the conflagration."

"All your efforts to give the lie to our Lord's prediction will be fruitless," Lucius answered.

The cloisters were already on fire when they reached the spot, and on the north side of the holy house smoke and flames were seen to ascend. The temple itself still stood unhurt in all its glory and majestic proportions. "Let the men form a line to the pond on the north side; it must and shall be extinguished," Titus commanded.

The tumult and clamor of the disorderly soldiery, the shrieks of the dying were deafening. To the roof of the royal cloisters, which on the south joined the outer court of the temple, a multitude of the people, chiefly women and children, in number about six thousand<sup>1)</sup> had fled for refuge; these were all burnt to death, not one escaping with his life. In vain did Titus by word and sign command the fire to be quenched, and endeavor to restore tranquility and order; he was not heard, his behests were not heeded, the noise drowned his voice, his signal was not seen by the soldiers, bent as they were on bloodshed and plunder; each one's own passion was his commander at that time. As they crowded into the temple many of them were trampled on by one another, while a great number fell among the ruins which were still hot and smoking and met their death amid the burning rafters that had formed the roof of the cloisters.

Not without difficulty did Titus work his way to the temple; accompanied by his officers, he entered the holy place. He was filled with amazement at the splendor and wealth, when he beheld the tables of oblation, the wall overlaid with plates of gold, the colossal candelabra, the vine over the entrance to the Holy of holies with its gigantic golden grapes, the candlesticks with seven branches and the table of shew-bread, fashioned of pure gold and so heavy, that its weight had secured it from the greedy hands of the plunderer. "What a glorious structure, and what immense riches!" Titus again ex-

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus, Wars of the Jews, VI. 5, 2.

claimed. He then resolved to make one last effort to save the temple. "As yet only the rooms round about are on fire, the flames have not reached the interior! Lucius, Cerealis, assemble those men on whom you can rely and force the troops to put out the fire. If need be, let the lictors beat the refractory ones with their staves. I will have it, the temple shall not be given over to destruction!"

"Too late!" Cerealis rejoined. "Caesar, do you not see the flames bursting out from beneath that door which leads to the upper chambers?"

"By Jupiter! These mad fellows must have thrown fire on the threshold while we were actually standing here; Well, well, we mortals cannot contend against fate. Lucius, I could almost believe that the prophet of Nazareth you speak of possessed supernatural knowledge. At any rate, try to save this golden table, the candlesticks, and any thing else that can be carried away, from being destroyed."

Titus left the temple sorrowfully. The officers collected a few trustworthy men just in time to rescue the table of shew-bread, the altar of incense and the candelabra. The flames had already mounted to the roof of the sanctuary. The dry wood, the thick rafters of cedar blazed furiously, and the molten gold of the plates wherewith they were covered fell in heavy, burning drops to the ground below.

"We must be gone," the decurion Martius exclaimed. "It is a pity; I should have no objection to gather a bunch of those golden grapes, hanging on the vine over there."

"Pray how did you propose to get them, comrade?" one of his men remarked, sneeringly. "Why that vine hangs some 120 feet high. But I tell you what, we will make a note of the place, for the gold will all be found amid the rubbish, when it is cool enough for us to search in it. Come away now! The heat is intolerable, and the flames are spreading to the next roof."

"What an immense weight this candlestick is! One wonders however the Jews scraped together such a mass of gold. I did not know there was as much to be found in the whole wide world. Take care that it is not hurt!"

"Yes, they will open their eyes in Rome, when they see all those pretty things! I understand now why our gods are jealous of the God of the Jews. Our emperors did not make them any such offerings."

Lucius bade them make haste, and warned the other soldiers, who wanted to strip some pieces of the gold from the walls, that they had better leave the building. Some did not listen to him, and fell victims to their rapacity.

Lucius paused a moment to cast one look at the magnificence of the lordly structure, shining in the almost perpendicular rays of the midday sun. "For the last time!" he exclaimed. "Ere long it will be a heap of blackened ruins." As he spoke, a blazing log fell from the roof of the sanctuary, and set fire to the Holy of holies, beautiful in its fourfold coloring. It flared up, being rent asunder as the burning fragments ascended, and were scattered far and wide. The tears came to Lucius' eyes as he wended his way back to the fortress over the blood-stained ground, amid the dead bodies of the fallen. "Great and adorable art Thou, O Lord, in the manifestation of Thy avenging justice as in that of Thy tender compassion," he murmured. "The destruction of this temple by fire is but a foreshadowing of the Judgment to come, when in the presence of the wrathful Judge the whole earth will be consumed in an awful conflagration!"

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## CHAPTER 51.

### Heroic Deeds.

In great excitement Nathaniel watched by his brother's bedside, and listened to the noise of battle that reached his ear in the remote chamber whither the sick man had been removed after the Antonia was taken by the Romans. It was situated under the roof, in the northern wing, adjoining the rooms appropriated to the virgins who served in the temple. For the roof of the cloisters was no longer a place for a wounded man, as it was occupied by the Zealots, who day and night kept up an incessant discharge of arrows and other missiles upon the enemy, while the battering-rams had been brought up to play on the fortifications. Eleazar entreated to be allowed to die under the open vault of heaven, in sight of the adversary; he even said: "Throw me down from the battlements upon the storming party, that I may at least crush and kill one man in my fall." But no one heeded the ravings of a fever-patient, and he was carried to the hot, close chamber under the burning roof.

There he lay for the most part in a kind of stupor, or listening to the dull deep sound of the battering-rams, that went to the very marrow of his bones. Eusebius wondered how long his iron constitution would hold out against the poison which overflowed into his veins from the festering wound.

"This day will be his last," Eusebius said when he paid him his accustomed visit on the morning of the 10th of August. "Give him some of these drops, and if perchance he comes to himself, you may make a last attempt to induce him to believe in Christ and receive baptism. While there is life there is hope. Rachel has suffered so much and prayed so much for him; it may be that the Lord will soften his hard heart after all. But if he bursts into a fury again, do not say another word."

Thereupon the physician went his way to the city where were many sick and dying in need of his succor and solace. He wanted to take Thamar with him, but she thought herself bound by the promise she had given Eleazar to remain with him to the end; besides, she did not like to leave poor Rachel alone at such a trying time. Tired out with sitting up all night, they withdrew to an adjoining chamber to take a little rest, bidding Nathaniel call them, if the sick man showed any signs of returning consciousness. The noise of the battering-rams had ceased, and for the moment comparative tranquillity prevailed.

The quiet lasted about an hour; at the end of that time voices were heard in the Court of the Women. Nathaniel caught the words: "They are setting the gates on fire," and ran in terror to the window. Almost immediately Giezi entered the room and confirmed the truth of what the boy had heard. What was he to do? He wished he had told the old servant, who went away directly to rescue Caiaphas, to find some of Eleazar's friends who would come and save him from being burnt to death. He knew that even with the help of the women he could not carry him down the stairs. He ran to and fro from the bed to the window several times perplexed and irresolute, then all at once he saw a change come over Eleazar's countenance.

"Brother, brother, do you know me now?" he cried. "Just think they have set the gates of the temple on fire!"

"Give me some water, Nathaniel, I am consumed with thirst. What are the people shouting? Fire? Is the temple really on fire!"

"So they say, but do not be alarmed. The fire will be extinguished, or I will fetch some men to carry you away from here. I will call Rachel and Thamar, they will stay with you till I come back with some bearers. Keep quiet; we will fetch you in good time!"

A few moments later the two women were again at their post beside the dying man, who had closed his eyes and lay quite still. Nathaniel went for help. As he left the room he said: "If he dies before I come back, do not wait for me. You know the trap door in



Eleazar's room next to the Gasith chamber, you can get through that into the subterranean way. Stay there at the foot of the steps till I come and show you the way out."

For what seemed a long time the two women waited and watched, but Eleazar did not open his eyes again. "He will pass away like this," Rachel said sobbing.

Just then the uproar occasioned by the last desperate sally began. Ben Gioras was heard to exclaim: "Let all who can come save themselves with us!" This was followed by a chorus of wailing and woe.

"What is to become of us! The Romans are making their way in!" Thamar said to herself.

Then the aged Phenenna entered, with the three virgins who had alone remained with her; they too were weeping and wailing. "All that the Lord foretold is being accomplished," she said. "The heathen are penetrating into His sanctuary, and not one stone will be left upon another!"

"God be thanked, dear Mother, for having brought you and these your pupils to the knowledge of the truth. We have all been born again by water and the Holy Ghost, and may hope to find a merciful Judge in Christ our Lord." Thus Thamar tried to console the mourning women.

Then again the appalling cry resounded from the court below: "The temple is on fire! The temple is being burnt down!"

Thamar turned white to the lips. "Fly, mother, fly with your daughters. Be quick, try and pass through the corridor above the Nicanor Gate into the south wing. There in the chamber adjoining the Gazith there is a trap door, it takes into an underground passage. Go down the steps and wait at the bottom for Nathaniel, who will show you a place of safety."

"And you, my daughter? Will you not come too and escape from the flames?" Phenenna inquired.

"I will come as soon as I am free. I cannot leave Rachel and Eleazar now. Pray for us and for him; he is dying."

"God bless you for all you have done for me! And may He send to your succor His holy angel who suffered

not the fire to touch the three children in the fiery furnace." The aged lady then departed to seek safety for herself and her companions.

In vain Rachel urged Thamar to go with Phenenna. "It is quite enough if I stay with Eleazar till Nathaniel comes with help," she said. "You are young, save your life."

"No, Rachel, go yourself. Remember this poor fellow is more inclined to do what I ask him than what you ask; let me stay here and make a final attempt to save his soul," Thamar rejoined.

"You will give up your life for him? O let me make the sacrifice!"

"Look, you are just as willing as I am to sacrifice yourself for him, though he never returned your affection. I could not give him my heart, as he wished, I will give my life for him instead, as our Lord laid down His life for His enemies."

While this generous contest went on, the devouring flames were gaining ground rapidly in the temple. The Courts were comparatively quiet, the fight and the butchery were over. Now from the Holy of holies the crackling of the flames, the crash of falling timber was distinctly audible, and Thamar, glancing in that direction, saw the Roman soldiers carrying out the candlesticks with seven branches. Others followed dragging out the golden table of shew-bread, and — who was that fair-haired officer who was driving the plunderers out of the sanctuary? He turned his head; no, she had not been mistaken, it was Lucius whom she saw.

For a moment she forgot everything; the dying man, her own perilous situation, and only thought of him. Her heart beat so violently that she had to lay hold on the window-sill to steady herself. What should she do? Call to him? Hasten to him and beg him to carry the dying man in his strong arms out of the burning house? He would do it; he was so generous and besides he was a Christian. Then she remembered that if Eleazar saw him, his passionate anger would burst out afresh, and stifle every other feeling within his breast, and he would appear before his Judge with rage in his heart, before

that Judge who said: "In whatsoever place the tree shall fall, there it shall be." (Eccles. 11, 3.)

No, she could not venture to summon Lucius to her aid at that critical juncture.

Thamar watched the man she loved till he was out of sight. She told herself that all was over now, she should never see him again, and she prayed God to accept her sacrifice and have mercy on the soul that was so soon to take its flight.

Then she turned away and went back to the couch where Eleazar lay, to all appearances asleep. "The flames are coming nearer," she said to Rachel, "and Nathaniel seems unable to find any one to succor us. Let us give him a few drops of this cordial, perhaps with God's blessing it may have a good effect."

Shortly after Eleazar had swallowed the medicine, he opened his eyes, he looked calmer than he had done for weeks. Recognizing Rachel who was kneeling beside him, he thanked her in a gentler tone than she was wont to hear from his lips.

The tears started to her eyes, and she kissed the cold hand that moved restlessly over the coverlet. "O Eleazar, I always tried to be kind to you. Forgive me for not making your life happy!" she humbly begged.

The dying man shook his head, and after a short pause, he answered: "It was not your doing, but my own; I threw away the happiness that I might have had. Alas, for my pride, my anger! How wrongly I have acted, what wrong I have done to you. Forgive me."

"May God forgive you as freely as I do, dearest Eleazar," she said, kissing his forehead, already moist with the cold sweat of death. "He will forgive you if even at the last you grasp the hand which in His mercy He holds out to you."

"Alas, is it not too late? I had such a terrible dream; I thought the temple was on fire, and my grandfather who brought the curse on our house by putting the Nazarene to death, stood with my father amid the flames. They wanted to drag me in; I cried for help, and looking up to Heaven, I saw Jesus of Nazareth on the clouds, as my grandfather used to say so often, and with menacing

look He showed me a roll, whereon all my misdeeds were inscribed: my unkindness to you, the murder of Manahem the Galilean, the desecration of the temple, my pride and unbelief—an intolerable weight of guilt! In my dream I gave myself up to despair and was about to cast myself headlong into the flames, but you and Thamar held me back. Then I woke and saw you here. Where is Thamar?"

Thamar had withdrawn into the background when Eleazar woke to consciousness; she rejoiced to hear in what an altered tone he spoke to his wife. "Fool that I was," she said in her heart, "to think I should have the privilege of saving this soul! No, it is Rachel's reward for long years of patient love and labor." Then hearing her name, she stepped forward, saying: "I am here, Eleazar."

He turned towards her, but his eyes were already dimmed by the shadow of approaching death. "Where are you. I cannot see you, it is getting dark," he said. "Ah, that is your warm hand. Hold mine, do not let it go, to show you understand what I say: I have wronged you too. But what is this frightful heat? What are the people crying out? I hear the crackling of flames; am I dreaming again?"

"Shall we tell him?" Rachel whispered.

The ear of the dying man caught and comprehended the words. Hearing often remains, and is as acute as ever, when sight fails, and life is at its last ebb. "You are concealing something from me—I know what it is—the temple is on fire, and you are staying here with me—"

"To save your soul," Thamar quickly interposed, knowing the time was short. "Eleazar, do you believe that the Messiah has come? That Jesus of Nazareth—"

Eleazar made a supreme effort. "He was the Messiah. For years I have refused to believe it. I have struggled against my conviction.—Now I give in."

"Thank God!" Thamar exclaimed. "Quick, Rachel, baptize him, he is dying!"

With a trembling hand Rachel poured water on her husband's head and pronounced the formula of baptism. A deep breath heaved his breast, and Eleazar's spirit departed to appear before the tribunal of his Judge.

"It is all over! Oh I trust he is saved," Thamar said to Rachel when she had made certain that life was really extinct. "What better consolation could you have?" Rachel threw her arms round the generous maiden, and thanked her with tears of deep emotion.

"Now we have not a minute to lose. It seems that the fire is all round us and under us too. How burning the air is! Look, is not that smoke coming up through the floor?"

It was indeed smoke. The firebrands which the soldiers who had penetrated into the interior of the temple, thrust under the doors leading to the northern wing, had set on fire the wood which was piled up there for use in washing the sacerdotal vestments; and from the ground floor the flames had mounted up by way of the gallery in the Court of the Women, ascending thence to the upper story. At the same time the flames bursting through the roof of the sanctuary had spread to the transept separating the Court of the Men from the Court of the Women. The roof of the southern wing was also on fire; the dry timber caught like tinder and flared up instantly, emitting a sheet of flame and volumes of smoke.

A single glance out of the window showed Thamar the peril of the situation. There was no longer any possibility of making their escape through the corridor over the Nicanor Gate, and thus reaching the stairs which led down to the Gazith Chamber.

"Courage, Rachel!" Thamar said. "We must get onto the roof, and see if we can make our way to the flight of steps in the turret which takes down to the ground floor in the south wing, in the hall of the Nazarites. I hope we shall in that way be able to reach the Gazith Chamber and the subterranean passage where Nathaniel will surely have been waiting for us a long time already."

So saying she took the trembling woman by the arm, and drew her away from Eleazar's corpse. But the moment she opened the door, she was met by so dense a volume of smoke, that she hastily closed it again. "My good Angel, help us!" she cried; then she quickly dipped her veil in the water jug and wrapped it round

her head, bidding her companion do the same. "We must get out, it is only a few steps up to the roof," she said, dragging Rachel to the door. But when the door was again opened not only a thick cloud of black smoke but bright tongues of flame barred their passage; Rachel screamed and fell to the ground in a swoon.

All hope of escape seemed gone. Thamar could not bring it over herself to abandon her friend, and she had not the strength to carry her on to the roof. She knelt down beside her; her own head began to swim.

In the meantime Nathaniel had been seeking in vain for some one to rescue his brother. The Zealots had all disappeared; they were either slain or had retreated with Ben Gioras over the bridge to the Upper City. To escape from the terrible carnage going on in that quarter, the boy drew back into a corner under the steps that took up into the east tower of the south wing. Women and children were butchered before his eyes by the exasperated Romans; the boy shuddered with fear and horror as he listened to the vain cries for mercy uttered by the victims and the last groans from the lips of the dying. While this lasted he could not collect his thoughts, but by degrees quiet was restored, and he began to consider what he could do for his own rescue and that of his friends.

At first he thought he would wait till daybreak, and then creep round to the underground passage. But how about Rachel and Thamar? He could not leave them to their fate. By that time he thought Eleazar must surely be dead, and they would be waiting for him at the appointed place. Supposing however that the fire had all too soon reached the building where his brother and the two women were? Nathaniel had no conception of the rapidity with which a conflagration spreads; he remembered the massive stones that formed the walls of the temple, and tried to console himself by saying that they could not be burnt. Yet he grew more and more uneasy; he fancied he heard the crackling of flames above the clamor made by the soldiers at the East gate hard by: "My God, what shall I do to help them? Mercifully suggest some good idea to my foolish mind," he prayed in his distress.

He repeated a verse or two of the ninetyeth psalm, commending himself to the guardianship of the Angels, then he ventured out of his hiding-place. "They can but cut me down, as they have all these poor creatures, it is an easier death than burning," he said as he hesitatingly stepped over the heaps of corpses to the entrance of the Court of the Women. Slipping behind one of the massive pillars he glanced up at the windows of the room where Eleazar lay, and saw Thamar—if his eyes did not deceive him—in the act of turning away from it. Now he first became aware of the rapid progress the conflagration had made since he left Eleazar's side. At that time he could only see a few thin columns of smoke, now the roof of the north wing and the transept were wrapt in flames and there seemed no way of escape out of the imminent danger.

Nathaniel knew not which way to turn. He saw the soldiers carrying out the candelabra and the table of gold, and heard their comrades at the Corinthian gate exulting over the rich booty. His eyes filled with tears; he turned to fly when one of the soldiers who were engaged in pillage caught sight of him and drew his sword to hew him down. The panic-stricken boy entreated that his life might be spared. But before the blow fell, the arm that wielded the weapon was grasped from behind and a voice exclaimed: "Shame on you, to strike a mere child! Be off with you! Enough blood has been shed."

Nathaniel threw himself at his deliverer's feet stammering out his thanks. Raising his eyes he saw a handsome countenance with fair curly locks and kindly blue eyes, and instantly cried out: "The Centurion Lucius!"

"That is my name. How comes it that you know me?"

"I once saw you when my brother brought you as a prisoner to our house, and Benjamin and Thamar have talked about you so much, that I could not forget you," Nathaniel answered. Then he hastily added: "God and His good Angels have sent you! Help us and rescue us! Do you see yonder window? There my brother is lying at the point of death; Thamar and Rachel are with him, and the flames are getting nearer and nearer—"

"Do you mean Thamar, Rabbi Sadoc's daughter?" Lucius asked horror stricken at what he heard.

"Yes, Benjamin's sister — You will not rescue my poor brother, he is your enemy! But at least have pity on the two women, they have done no harm," Nathaniel entreated.

"If he were my deadliest enemy, a thousand times over I would rescue him if I could, and the two women; only tell me how it can be done." Lucius rejoined.

"Come, you are strong and can carry Eleazar," Nathaniel said, running up the stairs leading to the upper story of the south wing. Lucius followed him; all went well till they came near the transept above the Nicanor Gate. There a locked door barred their progress, and it was some time before the Roman officer could succeed in forcing it open. And when they reached the corridor they were driven back by the smoke and flames. The boy wrung his hands in despair.

"We cannot go any further this way, and if we could, it would be impossible to get back again with the sick man and the women. Do you know of no other way to the rooms above?" Lucius said.

Nathaniel, who had begun to cry, declared that he did not, and pointed to the windows of the lower story out of which the flames were already pouring. For a moment Lucius was nonplussed. Then he noticed that the roof of the eastern part of the building was still unburnt, and he thought that by means of it he could reach the northern wing. He remembered that the Jews had harried his troops with missiles thrown from the platform there, and concluded that there must be a flight of stairs leading on to it. Nathaniel confirmed this opinion, and they determined to make the forlorn attempt.

Hastily retracing their steps they mounted to the roof of the tower of the south wing. The battlements that crowned it rose several yards higher than the platform intervening between it and the tower at the other end, in the angle of the north wing, which was of a corresponding height. The lofty platform over the Eastern Gate, with its lordly crown of pinnacles also offered an almost insurmountable obstacle.

"However could we contrive to bring a wounded man and two women over here?" Lucius asked in dismay.



"If we could only get them on to the tower yonder the stairs leading down to the gate might still be passable. You would protect us from your comrades," Nathaniel answered.

"Well, we can but try," the Roman rejoined, swinging himself over the battlements, whence he could just let himself down on to the edge of the platform below. He helped Nathaniel down; then they hastened to the tower crowning the Eastern or Corinthian Gate. That had also to be climbed at no small personal risk.

When he reached the roof of the tower, Lucius was descried by the soldiers who had crowded in the spacious Court of the Gentiles and stood watching the flames devouring the temple with mingled feelings of delight and horror. Over against the Eastern gate the legions had set up their ensigns, and there they offered incense to the great silver eagle of Jupiter. The thin thread of fragrant smoke rose on the still air, while columns of fire, consuming thousands of corpses, flared up to the heavens. In a semi-circle behind the ensigns Titus was standing with the officers of his staff. Suddenly Cerealis, to whom the decurion Martius had pointed out the figure climbing over the battlements, was heard to exclaim: "Lucius! It is the legate Lucius Flavus!"

"So it is, by Jupiter," Titus said. "How can the man have got up there and what can he want! No doubt it is some hare-brained scheme, connected with his creed in some way or other. Otherwise I consider him a thoroughly able, valorous officer, trustworthy in every respect, and as devotedly loyal to the Emperor as any one could be, in spite of his strange tenets. We must try to rescue him. Lucius, Lucius Flavus!" the commander-in-chief shouted at the top of his voice.

The Legate heard him and advanced to the parapet. He saluted the General and shouted in his turn, pointing to the east tower of the north wing: "Take ladders and ropes over there!"

"For God's sake!" Nathaniel ejaculated. "The flames are bursting out over the roof! Shall we be in time?"

In fact, when they reached the tower even the daring Lucius hesitated a moment. The greater part of the

north wing was all ablaze, and the heat that met them was perfectly stifling. "Where is the trap-door by which we can get into the room?" he asked.

Nathaniel indicated the place, which happily was not far off.

"And when I get through, which is the door, and is it to the right or the left?"

Again Nathaniel gave the desired information, adding he would go down too. But Lucius forbade him, saying: "Stay here, it is quite enough for one of us to risk his life. If I do not come back in a few minutes, save yourself by way of the stairs if you can. Or wait in the shelter of the wall till Titus sends aid. God help us both."

While Lucius leapt upon the roof of the north wing, and rushed to the trap-door, holding up his military cloak with his left hand like a shield to protect his head from the fierce heat, he prepared himself for death, and made a heartfelt act of contrition and sorrow for the sins of his past life. He thought of his mother and sister, who would probably never hear of him again. It is wonderful how much passes through the mind in such moments of intense excitement, and how long-forgotten memories start up afresh. Thus whilst Lucius opened the trap-door, and with teeth firmly set groped his way through the dense smoke down the stairs, he remembered a trifling childish fault whereby he had vexed his mother, and it grieved him to think he should never have an opportunity of again asking her to forgive him.

Holding his breath he fled onward. The third door on the right; there it was, he burst it open. "Thamar" he cried.

He heard a faint cry for help and through the smoke he saw a slender figure rise from the floor.

"Be quick, go on to the roof. Where is the wounded man?"

"He is dead, but there is Rachel, she has fainted. My God, I can do no more!"

Lucius caught her in his arms and carried her to the roof. He stopped one minute to take breath, then fought his way back to the room and exerting his strength to

the utmost, bore Rachel also up the stairs. Happily Thamar was sufficiently revived to walk the few steps to the tower; the wet veil, which she had wound round her head and neck just before Lucius' arrival was of great service to her, and Rachel partly recovered consciousness.

With Lucius' help Thamar clambered on to the platform, and between them they managed to lift Rachel up. Then Lucius followed, and he thought the worst was over. But Nathaniel came running up to say that the spiral staircase was quite impassable; in fact a dense mass of smoke issued out of the entrance to it as soon as it was opened.

What was to be done now? Lucius stepped on to the parapet and looked down on the sea of heads in the fore courts below. The people saw him, shouted and made signs to him, directing his attention to a wide projection in the massive wall of the temple which would afford a temporary shelter from the heat of the advancing fire. They could reach that ledge with ladders, but it was some fifteen or sixteen feet nearer the ground than the breastwork over which Lucius was leaning, and the only way to reach it was by jumping down. The width of the projection diminished the danger to a great extent, but it would be an adventurous leap even for a brave man for the sake of saving his life, and for women it appeared out of the question.

Yet when Lucius asked Thamar, she said she would attempt it, but Rachel lacked the nerve, she begged the others to save themselves and leave her to her fate. This they would not consent to do.

"Would you venture?" Lucius said to Nathaniel.

The boy looked down from the giddy height where he stood with a doubtful expression, then he said: "You go first, I will jump after you."

"That will not do, I will tell you why," Lucius responded. "You must go down to the Romans below and take a message to Titus. He will send a strong soldier up to the projection who can help me to get these women down."

Lucius hastily scribbled a few words on the tablets

he took from his breast pocket, and gave them to the youth, saying: "Make up your mind at once. The flames are fast gaining ground. Our rescue depends on your courage."

"The soldiers will surely cut me to pieces," Nathaniel replied, "but perhaps they will read the tablets and come to your succor. Farewell Thamar, farewell Rachel." And commending himself to his guardian angel, he sprang from the parapet, alighting on his hands and knees in the centre of the projecting ledge of masonry.

"Have you hurt yourself?" Thamar called out to him. Nathaniel was hurt, but he would not show it, and looking up, forced a smile while he shook his head. Then he crept along to the ladder, the top of which did not reach up to the projection, and tried to put his foot on to the first rung. It was a perilous moment; Thamar grew giddy at the sight and had to turn away; Lucius also trembled for the boy, as had his foot slipped, he would have been dashed to pieces on the pavement below.

Happily he managed to get on to the ladder, and descended as quickly as he could to the soldiers standing at the foot. Before he got within their reach, he turned round and called to those who were nearest, and whose hands were already stretched out to help him down: "Take this from the Legate Lucius Flavus to Titus your General; then you are at liberty to make short work of me."

The soldiers however admired the boy's pluck, and bade him come down quick and deliver the message himself to Titus.<sup>1)</sup>

A few minutes later, Nathaniel was admitted to the commander's presence. He handed him the tablets, on which these words were inscribed: "*For mercy's sake, good Titus, send Martius the decurion to me with a stout rope some thirty feet long, I must save the life of two persons who are very dear to me.*"

"What mad ideas this Christian takes into his head! To persist in rescuing two Jewesses at the risk of his

<sup>1)</sup> Josephus the historian relates a similar anecdote of a boy who when the temple was on fire, climbed down the walls to fetch water for his companions. (Wars of the Jews, VI. 6, 1.)

own life, when thousands of their fellow countrymen have been crucified to the just vengeance of the gods! But let him have what he wants." The General gave the order half-angrily, though in his secret heart he marvelled at the generous valor of the Christian officer.

Martius the decurion lost no time in mounting the ladder with a coil of rope. He threw it up to Lucius who by its means cautiously let the two women one after the other down to where the soldier was standing. Then he leapt down himself, and all four reached the ground in safety. Titus was standing at the foot of the ladder, having come in person to witness the end of the adventure. By his permission Lucius conducted his friends to the camp.

The conflagration had now reached its culminating point. Huge columns of flame, crackling and roaring, rose up to Heaven from every roof. The falling rafters broke through one story after another and finally set on fire the subterranean treasury chambers, where an immense quantity of valuables of all kinds were deposited. Josephus says: "One might have thought that the hill itself whereon the temple stood was full of fire in every part of it." And in concert with the roar of the devouring element myriads of voices ascended from the city in wailing, groans, lamentations and doleful cries, for in losing their temple the Jews lost their all.

Lucius and Nathaniel had scarcely left the Court of the Temple when an aged man was seen to appear on the roof above its eastern portal. It was the maniac Caiaphas. Escaping out of the Gazith chamber, he found himself surrounded with a ring of fire. Dashing through the flames he got out upon the roof, and there from the pinnacles of the sacred building he saw below him a surging crowd of Roman soldiers, behind him the sanctuary in flames. For a moment or two he ran wildly to and fro, tearing his snowy beard; then with a shrill cry of despair, he threw up his arms above his head and precipitated himself headlong into the raging flames.

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## CHAPTER 52.

### Back again in Bethania.

When Benjamin came to his father with the tidings that the temple was on fire the Rabbi would not believe him. "Titus promised me that he would preserve it from destruction, and for that promise I made over to him more than the half of all I possess," he exclaimed, and hastened out of the camp with his son. When he actually saw the ever-increasing volumes of smoke and flame arising from the roof of the holy house, he rent his garments and cast dust upon his head, scarcely able to restrain the wild outburst of his bitter grief. Benjamin's eyes, too, filled with tears, and he sobbed aloud. But of this divine chastisement he had been forewarned.

"O Father," he said, "was not Jesus right, when He wept over Jerusalem and over the temple! Lucius told me it was out yonder that He stood when He shed tears over the ungrateful city, which killed the prophets and those whom God sent to them, when He predicted all that is now accomplished in our sight. Look Father, look how it burns! Will you not acknowledge now that the blessed Jesus spoke words of truth? Do you not hear the wailing? The cries and lamentations reach us even here!"

The spectacle before him of the temple in flames, did in fact break down the obdurate resistance of the Rabbi. Crushed and overwhelmed with grief, he fell on his knees and cried aloud to Heaven: "God of my fathers, have mercy, have compassion upon me! I see now that I have wilfully shut my eyes to the abundant proofs afforded me by the resurrection and the miracles of Jesus Thy Son. Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief! Punish me not according to the measure of my iniquity, but give me a share in the great redemption, which Jesus purchased upon the cross for repentant sinners!"

Such was the supplication the Rabbi sent up to Heaven, and in which Benjamin joined with tears of joy. And as if Almighty God vouchsafed at that juncture to send a great and unlooked for happiness as a pledge of His pardoning love to the contrite and broken in spirit, behold, Lucius and Nathaniel with the two women, were seen approaching by the foot path.

Benjamin recognized his friend first of all, as he advanced by Lucius' side. "Father," he exclaimed, "here comes Nathaniel, the son of Ananus, whom I left behind in the house with Thamar. I am sure it is he, though he looks almost like a skeleton, and Lucius, the kind legate, is helping him along. And who are the two women who are following them? They are just coming round the hill, they are veiled, but — O Father, it is Thamar and our good Rachel!"

The joy of this unexpected meeting was almost too much for the agitated Rabbi. Few words were exchanged between him and his children; they embraced one another with tears, and it was not until the following day, when Thamar had related all her story to her father, that with few words but profound emotion, he thanked her rescuer for his timely help.

Lucius felt half inclined to take advantage of this opportunity to ask Rabbi Sadoc for the hand of his daughter, but he quickly abandoned the idea. "This is no time for courtship," he said to himself, "while the temple is in flames, and woe unspeakable prevails throughout Jerusalem. And who can say whether, after all she has gone through during this terrible period, her heart is still susceptible to earthly love?" In fact extreme gravity marked every feature of the girl's countenance, and it was some time before Benjamin's droll sallies could bring a smile to her lips.

A few days later Lucius, by the General's permission, took the little party under his protection to the abandoned farm at Bethania, where the memorable Feast of the Passover had been kept. There they could reside more tranquilly than in the camp, whilst awaiting the end of the siege and the fate of the friends whom they had left behind in the doomed city. Berenice had, it is

true, offered to take the two women with her to Caesarea, whither she reluctantly returned, after her wishes concerning the temple had been thwarted. But Thamar and Rachel courteously declined the royal lady's proposal, saying they could not make up their minds to go to so great a distance from the city, where their assistance was required by friends and relatives.

Meanwhile the siege of the Upper city pursued its regular course. Simon Ben Gioras and John of Gischala had offered to surrender, if Titus would grant them a free exit with their wives and children. But the Roman Commander would not hear of the conquered dictating their own terms, so he gave orders to erect the former banks before the walls, and bring the engines of war to batter them. This gave Lucius Flavus plenty of work, both by day and by night, as the General liked to have him on the spot.

Still Lucius found time to ride over to Bethania now and again, and the sight of his white horse approaching the quiet homestead was always a welcome one. All had once more been put in order, and old Silas, who had actually lived in Lazarus' cave ever since April, had at length been enticed into the light of day. At first he returned no answer to Benjamin's knocking and calling, so that the boy thought that either the old gardener had gone away, or was perhaps dead. So he summoned Nathaniel to his aid, and both together they managed with a lever to roll away the stone that closed the aperture; upon which they heard a strange grumbling noise in the cave, which frightened them so that they nearly took to their heels. Finally Silas emerged from his hiding-place, and was even persuaded to come into the house, as he was assured no Roman was there. Nothing however, could induce him to bring out the sacred things entrusted to his charge. He said they were safe where they were, and he would deliver them up into no hands but those of Eusebius or Bishop Simeon.

While Silas was seated comfortably at the table, for the first time for many months past, enjoying a goblet of wine and a cake of fresh bread which Rachel had set before him, Benjamin came running in to announce that



Lucius was coming, and another Roman with him. Instantly the mistrustful old man rose to his feet, drained his goblet, thrust the remains of the bread into his pocket and made a speedy exit by the back door, undeterred by the assurances given him that Lucius was a friend to be entirely trusted. "Romans are Romans," he muttered as he again disappeared into the cave.

Lucius brought with him Martius, who had sustained an injury to his hand whilst constructing the embankment. "Here is an old acquaintance," he said to Thamar on entering. "You must exercise your skill in healing his hurt, and he will protect you from the soldiers who are bent on pillage. You remember seeing him at the time of our first meeting?"

Thamar recognized Martius at once, and he was made heartily welcome. While the young girl bound up his hand and placed it in a sling, Lucius related the latest news concerning the siege. The distress caused by famine could go no further, he said. Titus himself shuddered at the sight of the distress which he brought upon the city; but he excused himself by attributing the blame to the misdeeds of the inhabitants for which they were chastised by Heaven.

"Yesterday," he continued, "a sad instance came to our ears. A poor woman, driven out of her senses by the pangs of hunger, and the stress of want, killed her own child, and roasted him. Presently the robbers, attracted by the smell, burst into her house, and threatened to cut her throat immediately if she did not give them the food she had prepared. The poor crazy creature set before them the remains of the horrid meal, saying: "This is my son, and what hath been done is my own doing. Come eat of this food, I too have eaten of it; do not pretend to be more tender than a woman, more compassionate than a mother." <sup>1)</sup>

"How terrible! When will the end be?" the bystanders enquired.

"It will soon come. Tomorrow the battering-rams will be set to work, and then the last desperate engagement will follow. Already the besieged make but a

<sup>1)</sup> Ibid. VI. 3, 4.

feeble resistance, hunger seems to have done the work of conquest. But what I was going to say, Benjamin; since yesterday I have not seen any doves flying about the house we all know so well. I think there were a pair to be seen the day before yesterday, but today I looked for them in vain."

"Alas! then Rhode has killed them all!" Benjamin exclaimed.

"Or perhaps the robbers have shot them with arrows, and who can say that they have not put Paulinus and his mother and both the maids to death," Nathaniel said.

"I believe they have long ago succumbed to starvation or the pestilence," Rachel observed mournfully.

"God and his good angels will take care of them," Thamar said confidently. "Paulina once told me that it was foretold her by the mother of our Lord, that she would outlive the tribulation of these days, and not depart out of this valley of tears until after the city was taken. So I hope that the others will be alive as well. O Lucius, I need scarcely beg you to hasten to their help, as soon as your legions enter the unhappy city."

"Even were I not a Christian, ordinary gratitude would compel me to do so," the Legate answered. "But tell me, where am I to find Eusebius and his wife Salome?"

"Not far off, in the house wherein our Lord instituted the mysteries of His love. Oh, you do not know it, you were never there," Thamar rejoined. She then described the place where the coenaculum was.

Benjamin and Nathaniel begged Lucius to permit them to go with him as guides, when he should enter the conquered city. But he refused, saying he could not have boys in the ranks of the storming party, and he thought he could find his way quite well by Thamar's instructions.

"But you must pray," he added "that I may not arrive too late to be of any use. For the orders Titus issued today to the troops sound terribly cruel and sanguinary. Not only were all who were taken with arms in their hands to be crucified or sentenced to die in the arena, but even the sick and infirm were to be slain

without exception. The youngest and most beautiful of the men and youths were to be reserved to grace the triumph; all the others, men and women were to be sent as slaves to work in the Egyptian mines, on the galleys, or on the public buildings in Rome. Those under seventeen years of age were to be sold as slaves."

All his hearers uttered exclamations of horror. "Can you not induce Titus to greater clemency?" Thamar asked.

"I have tried in vain to do so. Titus is a Roman and a pagan to the backbone; there is not a fibre of Christian compassion in his heart," Lucius replied. "Besides, it must be owned that this foolish resistance on the part of the Jews has thoroughly incensed both the General and the whole army. 'The time of pardon is past,' he said to the priests, who when the holy house was burnt, begged for their lives; and they were all put to death."<sup>1</sup>)

Rabbi Sadoc enquired whether the offer of a large sum of money would obtain a mitigation of the cruel sentence, but Lucius replied that it had already been proclaimed to the legions and could not possibly be revoked. So when they parted, they felt that a terrible and inevitable judgment was in store for them.

Early on the following day the two boys went up to the Mount of Olives with the decurion, with whom they had soon made friends. The ill-fated city lay at their feet. Thin columns of smoke still ascended here and there from the charred and blackened walls of the temple.

"The heat is still so great below the rubbish," Martius said, "that no one as yet can search for the gold, although great masses of it are not far below the surface. The fire has cracked the huge blocks of marble and perfectly calcined some of them."

"Yes," Nathaniel answered, "our Lord's prediction is indeed literally fulfilled: 'Amen, I say to you, there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed.'"

On the western side of the temple the machines could be seen in full play, hurling spears and stones on to the

<sup>1</sup>) Ibid. VI. 6, 1.

roofs and into the streets of the city, while the thud of the battering-rams, thundering against the massive walls could be heard as far as Mount Olivet. The men ran to and fro upon the embankment like ants upon an anthill, and behind it the legions stood drawn up in battle array, ready for the assault.

Suddenly there was a lull; the projectiles ceased to fly, the battering-rams also suspended their work of destruction.

"What can the reason of that be?" cried Martius.

"Look there, over at the Fish gate; they are making signals and waving palmbranches," Benjamin exclaimed.

"They are asking mercy and are about to open the gates," said Martius. "By Hercules, I hear the trumpet-call. The soldiers are leaving the banks and crowding to the gates. And I, child of misfortune that I am, must needs have my right hand disabled on the very eve of the day on which the looting begins! But I have no intention of standing here and watching my comrades' entry into the town. You go home, boys; I am off to see if my left hand is not strong enough to carry away a good portion of the spoils."

"Take us with you, take us with you," the boys entreated. "We will show you the nearest way."

"Come if you like, only mind you keep close to me, otherwise I would not give much for your chance of life or liberty by night," the decurion replied, as he began to descend the hill with great strides, so that his companions could hardly keep up with him.

Ben Gioras and the Galilean at last had seen that all further resistance was hopeless. After an unsuccessful attempt to break through the wall of enclosure close to the pool of Siloe, the former had sought refuge in the subterranean passages in the hill whereon the temple stood, while the other crept into the vaults below Herod's tower, and endeavored to dig out a way of escape under the walls, taking with him masons, who should help him to carry away his treasures. But hunger soon drove them out of their hiding places, and Titus had them heavily ironed, and kept in reserve to figure in his triumph. Their followers, utterly disheartened, having

lost their leaders, at once laid down their arms and asked for mercy.

Their petition came too late. Many were hewn down by the guards at the gate, and the soldiers, like a devastating stream poured into all the squares and streets, all the lanes and alleys of the city with joyful acclamations. *Io triumphe* resounded on every side. "Mars, Mars, down with the foes of Rome." And during the next twelve hours deeds of cruelty and horror were committed which are a stain on the pages of history, and which the chronicler of the incidents of this sad time gladly passes over in silence.

In the house which our Blessed Lady had hallowed by her presence Paulinus knelt by the bedside of his dying mother. The two servants Rhode and Sara were also there, besides the pious old Salome.

At sunrise they had said their morning prayers as usual. Then the last pair of doves flew into the room, and walking about the coverlet of the bed, seemed to beg for the crumbs which formed their accustomed repast; each day there had been less to spare for them. Paulina smiled faintly at the sight of her pets, whilst Rhode, gently stroking the pretty creatures, said with tears in her eyes: "They must be sacrificed, there is no help for it. One divided among four persons each day will scarcely keep us from starvation. Which of the two shall die first?"

Paulina stretched out her white, trembling hand as if to protect the birds. "Neither," she said. "Our sorrows are nearly ended. Last night I saw the Mother of our Lord, she beckoned me to go to her. I should be grateful if you would call Eusebius at once. Ask him to bring the sacred viaticum and the holy oils; time is ended for me, eternity will soon begin."

"O my dear mistress, you seem better today than you have been for a long time," Rhode exclaimed; but on looking attentively at the pallid features of the sick woman, a change came over her own countenance, and she hastened out to tell Paulinus, who instantly went to the Cenacle, and returned accompanied by the Priest.

Scarcely had the sacred rites been performed, when

the trumpet blast of the victorious Romans rang through the streets, their triumphant shouts mingling with the wailing of the unhappy inhabitants, disturbing the peace of the quiet household. "Courage and confidence," ejaculated the dying woman. "God and his holy angels have hitherto protected this habitation from harm; they will not abandon us in this supreme hour. Farewell, all of you. And you above all, my son, preserve the crown which is given into your keeping. The peace of the Lord be with you and with all men of good will. Glory to God in the highest! Amen." Her head fell back on the pillow, and her eyes closed in their last long sleep.

Eusebius and Paulinus with the women were still kneeling in prayer beside the departed, when a loud knocking was heard at the door, and rough voices demanded admittance. Paulinus kissed his mother's hand, made the sign of the cross, and went unhesitatingly to the door. The women shrieked when it was opened, and several soldiers with drawn swords entered the chamber.

"In the name of God, I beg you to show reverence to the presence of death, which has just entered before you," Paulinus said to them.

"Who are we that we should have any reverence for death?" the Romans rejoined. "Death is our business, as you and these old crows shall find out presently. But first bring out your money, or I swear, the most cruel tortures shall force it from you. I am an adept at that sort of thing!"

The barbarians were actually putting their threat into execution and were engaged in gagging and binding the young man, when the door was again thrust open and a big, broadshouldered man came in, his right arm in a sling. "You have come to the wrong house, comrades," he said. "Bind the rebels and rob the rich. These people are neither the one nor the other, and besides, they are under my protection."

"Hullo, here is decurion Martius of the twelfth legion!" exclaimed one of the pillaging party. "What business have you pray to order us about? Do you want to pick a quarrel with us. I have my sword handy, if you do not take yourself off."

"O coward! You can be brave enough when I am unable to use my right arm. Come on though, my left hand is good enough for you," Martius answered, as planting his back against the wall he brandished his sword with his left hand.

At that moment a boy's voice was heard outside calling: "Lucius, Lucius! Come quickly, they are going to kill our good Martius!" A minute later the legate leapt from his horse; the soldiers made off directly, and he entered the house together with Benjamin and Nathaniel.

"There now, see how God and His angels watch over us," Eusebius exclaimed, whilst Sara, at the sight of her darling boy, could not repress a cry of delight.

They were rescued, at least for the present, but the legate himself could not ensure their safety from the blind fury of the soldiery, intoxicated as they were by the licence attendant on victory. It was agreed to prepare for flight that same night. Lucius succeeded, by means of the decurion Martius, to collect a few Christian soldiers, who had been condemned with him to serve in the convict gang for the sake of their faith, and who had remained in the camp, not taking part in the pillage of the city; these he set to guard the house. Having thus made arrangements for the safety of his protégés, he accompanied Eusebius to the Cenacle, that the Priest might fetch the chalice used by our Lord at the Last Supper from its place of concealment, and carry it, under his escort to the house where our Lady once dwelt.

Meanwhile a last resting-place had been prepared for Paulina in the garden beneath the old fig-tree, and in the evening twilight she was laid in the grave by the mourners, in the hope of a joyous resurrection. Then Lucius urged them to start at once. The fugitives were not encumbered with much earthly goods; only the chalice which Eusebius concealed in the folds of his garment, was more precious in their sight than silver and gold. Nor would the offer of the richest jewels have induced Benjamin to part with the last pair of doves, which he and Nathaniel had caught and put into a cage, and which he carried with him most carefully. Thus, conducted by their escort of Christian soldiers,

the little band, protected by the holy angels, made their way out of the doomed city where the abomination of desolation prevailed. The stars shone peacefully in the heavens above when they reached the tranquil homestead in Bethania, where they were joyfully greeted by Thamar and Rachel, who were anxiously looking out for them.

The next day Titus held a grand review of his forces on the occasion of which he commended the valor displayed by both officers and privates, and distributed rewards to those who had signalized themselves in this war. Amongst those who were specially mentioned on account of their exploits, and to whom a place in the triumphal procession was promised, were the legate Lucius, the decurion Martius, and several Christian soldiers who had been in the convict company. Finally the General gave orders that the city of Jerusalem should be entirely demolished and made even to the ground, only the three loftiest towers erected by Herod, Phasaelus, Hippicus and Mariamne, were to be left standing. These were spared partly to compensate to Berenice for his failure in saving the temple. This led the ambitious queen to hope that her ardent desire to wear the imperial crown might soon be fulfilled. Titus was however far too worldly-wise to contract an alliance for life with a princess of Asiatic birth, who was an object of contempt to his officers and the whole army, and towards whom his father was by no means well disposed. She did indeed follow him to Rome, but there she was soon forced to acknowledge that the visions of the future conjured up by the Egyptian sorceress were false and deceitful.

After the review Titus rode with the legate to the upper city, in order to look round it once more, before the work of destruction began. At the gate of Ephraim he paused, and directed the attention of the commanders who accompanied him to the wonderful solidity of the walls and fortresses. Calling on his principal officers by name, he asked them, in accents of admiration, whether during their campaigns in Asia, Africa or in Europe, they had ever met with structures such as those. "Look," he said, "at the immense size of these stones!



measure the thickness of those walls! See here, at this place Nicon, the most ponderous of our battering-rams, thumped all day long, yet with all the violence of its blows not a single stone has been dislodged. We certainly have had God for our helper in this war! It was none other than God who drove the Jews out of these fortifications, for what could the hands of men or any machine do towards overthrowing this massive masonry!"<sup>1)</sup>)

The officers were no less astonished than Titus at the impregnable fortifications of the city, and agreed with him that the edict of a higher ruler had been issued for its destruction. As they entered the gate leading into the city, Lucius Flavus said to the General: "Now you see, Titus, how literally the prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth, pronounced between thirty and forty years ago, has been fulfilled."

"I cannot deny it, certainly," the General replied. "He must have been inspired by the gods like our sybils. But pray do not think that I shall adopt his doctrines because of that. I remain faithful to the gods of Rome, with whom the fate of our glorious empire stands or falls."

Lucius could say no more at that time, as the other legates pressed round Titus. They were lost in admiration at the colossal towers of the royal city, which Titus wished to be preserved as a monument of Jerusalem's former greatness and glory. They then went to the bridge of the temple and traversed the vast quadrangle in which it stood. All round blackened ruins were to be seen in the place of the splendid cloisters, and where the marble walls and golden roof of the sanctuary once dazzled the eyes of the spectators, a mass of debris encumbered the ground. In the outer court the prisoners were detained; they might be counted by thousands. They stood there in blank despair; some cursed their conquerors, others pleaded for pardon. Their petitions were fruitless; Caesar gave orders to the legate Fronto<sup>2)</sup>)

<sup>1)</sup> Ibid. VI. 9, 1.

<sup>2)</sup> Ibid. VI. 9, 2.

to send them to work as slaves in Egypt or on the galleys, after he had selected the finest and handsomest men to figure in his triumphal procession or for the games in the amphitheatre. Fronto lost no time in executing this behest. Long strings of captives chained together and driven like cattle by the brutal soldiers, wended their way to the nearest sea-port. As they turned a last, lingering look at Jerusalem, they saw the flames mounting up to Heaven. And simultaneously with the volumes of smoke and leaping flames there went up a wail of sorrow and despair, the agonized cry of the unhappy nation, now no longer the chosen people of God.

On the following day Lucius Flavus asked the General's permission to escort his charges to Caesarea and Antioch. After that he wished to go to Rome, to search for his mother and sister, who had taken flight in order to escape Nero's cruel persecution. Titus willingly granted him the desired leave of absence, on condition however, that he should not fail to put in an appearance in the early part of the next year in time for the triumphal entry into Rome. "I owe my life to you," he said in conclusion, "and I do not forget the promise I then made to you. I shall keep my word; I shall not persecute the Christians." Lucius ventured to make one more attempt to convince his General of the divine character of the Christian doctrines. But Titus would not be persuaded to renounce fealty to the Roman deities. "We will not quarrel about the question whether Jupiter or Jesus shall claim the sovereignty of the world. The future will decide! Farewell, we will meet again!" He then added with a smile: "May I congratulate you on your betrothal to the fair and wealthy Jewish maiden, whom you rescued from the flames?"

Lucius colored, and said that under the circumstances he had not dared to press his suit, and Titus called after him, as he took his departure, that he hoped such a valiant warrior would soon find courage to make the attempt.

The brave Roman legate did not find the necessary courage until they had reached Caesarea, and tidings

came from Antioch, that the Jews were persecuted in that city. Rabbi Sadoc did not know whither to turn his steps. Thereupon Lucius offered him and his children a home in Italy, and asked for the hand of his daughter. The nuptials took place shortly after; Eusebius performed the ceremony on the self-same day on which he administered holy baptism to Rabbi Sadoc in the house of Cornelius.

Notes to Chapter 52.

Page 603.—“Now when Titus was come into this city, he admired not only some places of strength in it, but particularly the strong towers. . . . When he saw their solidity, their altitude and the largeness of their several stones, and the exactness of their joints, as also how great was their breadth and how extensive their length, he expressed himself in the following manner: “We have certainly had God for our helper in this war. It was none other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications, for what could the hands of men or any machines do towards overthrowing these towers.” And many such discourses he held to his friends. (Wars of the Jews, VI. 9, 1.)

Page 605.—According to Josephus, while the legate Fronto was determining the fate of the prisoners, eleven thousand of them perished for want of food. The number of those who were taken captive during the whole war he estimates at ninety-seven thousand; and the number of those who perished during the siege of Jerusalem, either being killed or dying of famine and pestilence, at eleven hundred thousand, all these persons being Jews. (VI. 9, 1, 2.)

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## CONCLUSION.

### The Day of Titus' Triumph.

In the following year, on the 17th of April 71 A. D. Titus made his triumphal entry into Rome, together with his father Vespasian, who had inaugurated the war with the Jews.

It was a beautiful spring morning; not a cloud was to be seen on the azure vault of Heaven beneath which lay the city of the seven hills. All the public squares and streets through which the victorious army would pass on its way to the Capitoline hill, were gorgeously decorated, and thronged with an expectant multitude. Heads appeared at every window, and even the roofs of the houses and palaces on the line of route were crowded with eager spectators.

Outside the city, for miles along the Appian Way, the *via triumphalis*, both sides of the road were lined with people. At the garden gate of the villa formerly the residence of the matron Lucina, two veiled ladies had been patiently waiting from an early hour in the morning.

"He will not ride by without looking towards the house, Lucilla," observed the elder of the two.

"Certainly not, mother," her companion answered, "if he is in the procession. But pray do not raise your hopes too high; we have never heard anything of him since we left Rome so hastily, except a vague report, which was not confirmed, that he had rejoined the army in Palestine."

"Was it likely that news of Lucius would reach us in our hiding-place in Umbria?" Lucina rejoined. "It was only quite lately that we heard that Nero was dead and Vespasian had been chosen Emperor. We lived like hermits in that remote valley, and our letters must have miscarried. But I hope he is still alive, and that we shall see him again today."

"God grant it! Listen there are the trumpets," Lucilla said.

"Here they come," shouted the mob, swaying too and fro in their excitement.

Lictors came first to clear the way, and heralds who proclaimed the grandeur and the glorious achievements of the divine Emperor and his son. After them rode a squadron of troopers in glittering armor, wreaths of laurel being wound round their brilliant helmets. Then came the senators, walking along solemnly in their togas of dazzling whiteness, then the highest dignitaries of the state, adorned with the insignia of their rank. They were followed by servitors who scattered among the bystanders the medals struck to commemorate the triumph. One of these fell at Lucilla's feet; she picked it up and showed it to her mother, saying: "On one side the head of Titus crowned with laurel, on the reverse the figure of a woman weeping, seated under a palm-tree."

Her mother read the legend: *Judaea capta*.

Now shouts of exultation from thousands of voices rent the air; the soldiers were passing with the spoils taken from the conquered city: the magnificent golden candlesticks with seven branches, which burnt day and night in the sanctuary; the golden table of shew-bread borne aloft on the men's shoulders, greatly excited Lucilla's admiration. "Look, mother," she exclaimed, "those gigantic scrolls of parchment with gold letters are surely the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets, who at the dictation of the Holy Spirit foretold the birth and life of the Son of God, His passion and His glory!"

"No doubt they are, my daughter, but do not speak so loud, and talk Greek, that the people may not understand you." Then they both looked with interest at the numerous trophies that were carried past; numbers of vases and vessels of pure gold taken out of the treasury of the temple, richly-chased shields of gold and silver of curious workmanship, votive offerings wherewith the kings of Israel adorned the walls of the holy house, the silver trumpets, used to proclaim the great feasts and the

year of Jubilee, lastly the half-charred beams and rafters of the Holy of holies covered with gold plates and ornamented with precious stones. Then soldiers followed carrying pictures of the siege and storming of several of the cities of Palestine; these were painted in glaring colors and raised aloft on poles. What elicited most admiration from the populace were two representations on a large scale of the city of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple; these were greeted with ringing cheers.

After this group had gone by the sacrificial victims next came, led by youths and accompanied by the priests of Jupiter. They were snow-white heifers with gilded horns, decked with garlands and ribbons. "Alas for the blindness of these people!" Lucilla murmured. "Those who offer the sacrifices are going to destruction as surely as the animals they are leading to the slaughter."

"Hush, child, speak low. Look, here come the human victims, whose blood will be shed freely in the next few days. That sinister-looking man in regal robes and manacled, who is walking first is probably the leader of the Jews."

The individual in question was truly the hapless Simon Ben Gioras, who had once been greeted by the Jews as the Messiah, the Son of David, and on whose soul rested the guilt of no small amount of bloodshed. His countenance wore a look of gloomy despair as he strode along to meet the death he knew was awaiting him in the Roman capital. John of Gischala walked beside him, a miserable, tottering figure. Both were received with mocking jeers, and mud was cast at them. After them came a Jew dressed in the vestments of the High-Priest; the twelve precious stones of his breast-plate gleamed in the sunlight. Seven hundred picked men and youths, all in festal garments and heavily ironed, followed in sombre silence.

"Only seven hundred to fight in the circus! There should be seven thousand at the very least," cried one of the spectators. "Did not Titus have more than two thousand cut to pieces in the amphitheatre at Caesarea in his brother's honor, and the same number at Berytus, and even more in Antioch?"

"Very true, very true, my bloodthirsty friend," answered a jester in the crowd. "I will tell you what you must do; join their ranks and then there will be seven hundred and one!"

This witticism provoked a shout of laughter. Then all the heads were stretched out, for the victorious troops began to march past, preceded by military music. A roar like the sound of ocean waves ran through the multitudes, it resounded on all sides; far and wide, from the walls of the city, from the hills all around the jubilant cry of the soldiers was reechoed: *Io triumphe! Io triumphe!*

"Now watch closely, lest you should miss Lucius," Lucina said to her daughter, her heart beating high with excitement and hope. Squadron after squadron, cohort after cohort marched past, singing and shouting, all with laurel wreaths on their helmets and garlands on their spears. Lucius was not among them. Then came ensigns and standard bearers; next the Praetorian band, followed by the gilded chariot, drawn by four splendid horses, in which was Vespasian, the first of the two victorious generals. With more than imperial dignity, with the bearing of a god the Emperor stood erect, arrayed in the robes of Jupiter Capitolinus, a purple tunic and toga richly embroidered with gold.

"Lucius is not there," his mother sighed, pressing her hands on her throbbing heart.

Lucilla consoled her by saying he might still come. A group of officers on horseback were approaching, escorting Titus, the second hero of the day.

"Those are only the most distinguished Tribunes and Legates. Lucius cannot have risen so high as to be among them," her mother replied.

Scarcely had these words escaped her lips, when one of the officers who was riding beside Titus' triumphal chariot, turned his head towards the house, and both mother and daughter uttered a cry of delight: "Lucius!" He caught the sound, and recognized them; a moment later he brought his horse to their side. But only a few words could be exchanged, for Lucius had to accompany the General to the Capitoline. He told them however to meet him at Aquila's house later on; then he spurred

his horse and again took his place in the procession; his heart swelling with greater and purer emotion than that of the proud victor on whose haughty head the golden laurel-wreath was resting.

In the evening of the same day, under Aquila's hospitable roof, Lucius introduced Thamar, his youthful bride and her brother Benjamin to his mother and sister. Rabbi Sadoc, who had taken the name of Cornelius at his baptism, did not wish to be presented to the Roman ladies until the next morning, for he spent the day of foreign triumph over his nation's fall and the destruction of the holy place in strict retirement with prayer and fasting. But all being Christians, they regarded one another as members of one and the same family, and Jews and Romans were united by the bond of charity. Lucina and her daughter greeted Paulinus as an old and dear friend, and with Rhode, Nathaniel and Rachel, whom Lucius had also brought to Rome, they soon formed one household. There was so much for each and all to relate; Paulinus showed Veronica's veil to Lucina and Lucilla, who venerated it with tears of emotion; Benjamin exhibited the cage containing the cherished white doves—in a word, there was no lack of conversation during those first happy days.

Rabbi Sadoc, or Cornelius as we must now call him, could not make himself at home in Rome. So Lucius went with him to Umbria, where he hoped to meet with a suitable house for the whole party near the hermitage where his mother had found a retreat. There was no want of means, for, urged by Lucius, Titus had caused the principal part of Sadoc's property, which had been held in sequestration at Antioch ever since the days when Cestius Gallus was Governor, to be handed over to him. The old man was delighted with the lake of Trasimene. The wide expanse of tranquil water, of a deep blue color, reminded him of the lake of Genesaret. Accordingly he purchased a large handsome Roman villa in the neighborhood, with vineyards and orange-groves; and in the autumn he removed thither with Lucina and Thamar and the whole family.

Before leaving Rome, Cornelius had a long interview



with Linus, St. Peter's successor in the Papal See, and was entrusted by him with a task which was thoroughly to his taste, that of transcribing the Holy Scriptures. He accepted it with enthusiasm, saying that his life should be devoted to the work. "As formerly I culpably resisted the Word of God, now I will apply all my learning and all my powers to make His holy Word known throughout all the world, and to transmit it to posterity in all its integrity. Holy Father, send the ablest Christian scribes whom you have to me to Umbria. They shall have the quietest, most pleasant room in my villa assigned to them; I will provide them with all that they may require for their work, and myself work with them and superintend them to ensure the text of the Holy Scriptures against the slightest alteration or falsification."

So spoke Cornelius; and having received the Pope's blessing, he withdrew to his home by the Trasimene lake to undertake with his scribes the important and useful work of furnishing the Church with correct and clear copies of the holy Gospels.



Five years, a whole lustrum, have elapsed since the events last recorded took place.

A new city was slowly rising on the ruins of the ancient Jerusalem; but Mount Moria remained waste and desolate, only a few scattered fragments recalling the former glory of the beautiful and magnificent temple. They too were soon to disappear, and the very foundations to be dug out, so that our Lord's prediction that not a stone should remain upon a stone was literally fulfilled.

The venerable bishop Simeon returned from Pella with his little flock, and caused the Coenaculum, which had escaped much damage, to be again arranged as a Christian church. He consoled the little community, who at first were distressed at the destruction of the temple. For until that time, as we have said, the Christians were accustomed to go up to the temple with the Jews to pray. "It was well for us that the Lord Jesus

went away from us, though we could not understand this at the time, and grieved sorely over His departure. So it is good for our Church that the temple of the Lord should be taken from us. While it was standing the Church of Christ would have been too much hampered by the old law, which is only a foreshadowing of the new sacrifice and a preparation for it. Now freed from these bonds she will grow and be developed, and form that spiritual Jerusalem which shall embrace the whole world, the city over which the Lamb rules who was slain from the beginning."

With these words the aged bishop encouraged his flock. He presided over them for thirty more years, and ended his days in the persecution under Trajan in the year 107, being crucified by order of Atticus the Governor. We read in the Roman martyrology that all who witnessed his death, even the judges who condemned him, were astonished at the courage and fortitude wherewith an old man a hundred and twenty years of age endured the tortures of the cross.

But in the period of which we are speaking, during the reign of Vespasian and Titus, the Church enjoyed freedom from persecution. We will conclude our narrative by placing before the reader a picture of those tranquil days.

On the eastern shore of the beautiful lake of Trasimene stands a large Roman villa shaded by orange trees. Graceful vines cling to the slender ionic columns of the peristyle and a fountain is heard to murmur gently amid the luxuriant shrubs in the garden. Over it white doves are hovering, some drinking from the marble basin, or picking up the grains of corn which a rosy-cheeked youngster some four years old is scattering for them on the gravel pathway.

"Grandmother, is Father coming soon?" he cries, addressing a venerable matron, who, sitting in the shade of an arbor, had nearly fallen asleep over the scroll she was reading.

"Yes, he is coming, Lucillus, and we are all going to meet him as soon as your little sister is awake," the old lady answered, stroking the fair curly head of the child at her knee.

The boy clapped his chubby hands in the joy of his heart. "Mother will come too, and Aunt Lucilla?" he asked.

"Certainly, and the white doves, if they will."

"No, they will not fly with us, but the white lamb Martius gave me shall come," he went on with childish delight. "Lucillus will lead it by the blue ribbon. And Uncle Benjamin will be there, but not Paulinus and Natha."

"Why are Paulinus and Nathaniel to be left at home?" the grandmother inquired.

"They must go on with their writing. Now I am going to fetch the lamb and wake Thamar, then we will set off."

The grandmother smiled at the imperious tone assumed by the little fellow. "A future commander-in-chief," she said to herself.

At that moment the graceful form of a beautiful young woman appeared at the top of the steps leading from the house into the garden, holding a child some two years old in her arms. The Roman matron went to meet her daughter-in-law and her grandchild.

Lucillus ran up with noisy welcome to an aged man somewhat bent, with a flowing white beard, who came out of the house leaning on the arm of a blooming maiden. "Grandfather," he cried, "and Aunt Lucilla, I am going with you, and my lamb; Here come Rachel and Sara and Rhode, and Uncle Benjamin, and Nathaniel and Paulinus too; have you finished your writing? If not, grandfather will scold you."

The scribes had duly completed their tasks to Cornelius' satisfaction, and the whole party set out just as the sun was sinking in all its glory behind the western hills. Lucius had gone to Rome in response to a pressing call from Titus, and it was not without uneasiness that Thamar anticipated his return. He was still attached to the service of the State, although his young wife would gladly have had him always with her. Under his care Cornelius had sent a large case of manuscripts to the Holy Father; the Gospels of the evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, besides all the epistles of

Paul and Peter, carefully transcribed word for word and letter for letter under his personal supervision. He was now waiting for a fresh supply of parchment and writing materials to continue the somewhat arduous work.

The shady avenue of chestnut-trees beside the smiling lake was soon left behind, and the highroad reached. The party had not waited long under a spreading elm when Benjamin, now a fine well-grown youth, exclaimed: "Here he comes!"

Little Lucillus clapped his hands and repeated the news: "Here comes Father, and Martius with him."

"Yes, here they come, but not they alone," Thamar remarked; "There is some one else riding with them to whom Lucius has given the place of honor on his right hand. Martius is modestly trotting behind."

"Who can it be? Perhaps Titus, after all—I cannot think of any one else to whom a Roman Legate would yield the place of honor," said the Rabbi, with a perplexed air. "And if it should be Titus, I would rather go away at once. I do indeed believe that with the help of God's grace I have forgiven him all he did to Jerusalem, his desecration of the temple, his profanation of the sacred vessels, but still I should prefer not to meet him."

"Stay here quietly, Father," Benjamin said: "That cannot be the Emperor, he is only riding on a mule."

Meanwhile the riders drew near, and little Lucillus would have run to meet his father had he not stood somewhat in awe of the stranger, who had a remarkably dignified appearance and mien.

Lucius now beckoned to his friends, calling out, "Come, come forward all of you. Today salvation is come to our house; for our Holy Father Linus, the successor of Peter and Christ's vicegerent on earth, has come to visit us! Kneel down to receive his blessing!"

Linus raised his hand and gave the papal benediction. Then little Lucillus lost his fear of the old man who looked so kindly at him, and dragging forward his lamb, asked him to bless that too.

The Pope smilingly complied with this childish request. Then he reminded the little fellow of the Lamb of God, and told him he must be one of the good and

obedient little lambs of God's fold. After that they all conducted Linus in triumph to the villa where he was entertained as a beloved and honored guest.

Later on in the evening Lucius told his wife the purpose for which he had been summoned to the Court. Vespasian was aging perceptibly, and to all appearance the day was not far off when the crown and sceptre would be taken from him by the ruthless hand of Death. In view of this Titus offered the important post of Prefect of his Lifeguards to Lucius, as he had perfect reliance on his loyalty. Lucius had conferred with the Pope about his acceptance of this offer, and Linus had allowed him to take the post, which was a most influential one, because it would place him in a position to do much for the welfare of the Church. "I would not however," Lucius concluded, "give a final answer until I heard what you thought about it, my Thamar. For the sacrifice involved in my acceptance of this post, falls as heavily upon you, if not more heavily than upon me. *'Procul a Jove, procul a fulmine,'* the proverb says. At a distance from Jove, at a distance from his thunderbolts. Certainly I need not fear that Titus will strike me with his lightnings, but behind Titus there stands his brother Domitian, who is longing for the day to come when death shall remove Titus also. The physicians do not promise him a long life. Now Domitian knows I am a Christian, and hates me accordingly. The day that he mounts the throne my death warrant will be signed. I read your answer in your eyes, Thamar, but before you speak, count the cost of the sacrifice. Tomorrow after you have received the Holy mysteries ask our Lord to counsel you, and then tell me your decision."

"Is there any hope of Titus becoming a Christian?" Thamar asked.

"I do not think so," Lucius replied. "Without humility no man can come to the truth. And how can one expect Titus, who is deified by the whole world, to be humble. He has everything that heart can wish, the heart at least of a Pagan. His name will be great to the end of time. Flavius Josephus is writing the history of the Jewish war in his honor, and you may be

sure he does not burn incense sparingly before the hero. The Senate is causing a splendid triumphal arch of costly marble to be erected to commemorate his exploits, and the bas-reliefs upon it will record his victory over Jerusalem to the latest posterity. The world cannot give more to her favorites than is given to him: Christ alone can give true immortality, an eternal crown to those who distinguish themselves in His service."

Lucius then told Thamar a great deal that was interesting about Rome, about the status of the Christians, the chapel Anacletus had erected over the tomb of St. Peter, the good reports that reached them from the communities in Spain, in Gaul, and in the Rhineland. Before he ended he said: "There is one thing more I must tell you; I came across Drusilla a few days ago. According to the world's judgment, fortune has been very unkind to her. She appears to have lost all her property, and of all her slaves only one, Helena, has remained faithful to her. But her misfortunes have been her salvation; she has become a Christian at last, and found the long-sought peace of mind. I asked her to pay us a visit, she is coming next week with Helena. I thought you would be pleased to see her."

"How kind you are! Certainly I have reason to be grateful to her. What has become of the unhappy Berenice?"

"Do not ask about her. She has fallen lower and lower. We must commend her to the mercy of God."

The next morning high festival was kept in the villa. In the best room in the house the Supreme Pontiff celebrated the Holy mysteries. Paulinus assisted him at the altar, and Benjamin and Nathaniel whom he anointed as acolytes, served his Mass; all who were fully initiated received Holy Communion.

Somewhat later the Pope inspected the work of the scribes and gave them his blessing. "Your transcripts will go out into all the world," he said. "You are Apostles and Preachers as much as we are who publish by word of mouth the divine truths. Nay, your work will be far more permanent than ours, for long after our tongues lie silent in the grave, the scriptures of

which you have multiplied the copies will be the greatest treasure of the Church. For out of these books which contain the written word of God, as from a treasury, Holy Church, guided by the Spirit of God, and possessing the golden key of Apostolic tradition, will to the end of time dispense to the nations the pure and immutable truths of the Christian faith, by which alone we can be saved."

With these and many other grave words of encouragement and instruction the successor of St. Peter gave solace and support to the hearts of those who listened to him. Moreover Paulinus, Benjamin and Nathaniel saw their most cherished desires fulfilled; all three were to return to Rome with the Holy Father, Paulinus to be ordained to the Priesthood before the end of the year, the other two to commence their theological studies under his direction. He enjoined upon Cornelius to pursue his work with the copyists in the service of the Church; Lucius he persuaded to accept the post of Commandant of the Lifeguards offered him by Titus. "It is a post of peril, that I will not deny," the aged Pontiff said; "but the Christian warrior ought not to shirk confronting dangers which hold out to him the hope of gaining the victor's wreath. You will be able to serve the cause of the Church better there than in the bosom of your family. I am convinced that your high-minded spouse and your pious mother will make the sacrifice willingly."

"We will do so gladly," Tamar and Lucina answered in one breath.

"May we not offer ourselves also to God?" Lucilla asked.

"Assuredly you may, and I have little doubt that your sacrifice will be accepted; that we shall all, even this innocent child here, playing with his lamb, be required to shed our blood for the faith. At present God has granted His Church a temporary respite, an interval of peace which will last as long as Titus is on the throne. But his brother Domitian is our bitter enemy; he hates the very name of Christian, and equals Nero in the cruelty of his character. Storms will soon arise and

much blood will be shed before the Church of Christ vanquishes her foes. Nay, the warfare she will have to wage will last until the consummation of the world. But her final triumph is certain. Christ is victor, Christ is king, Christ is ruler of the whole world."

The prediction uttered by Pope Linus has been fulfilled. It was accomplished in the case of those who heard it; and we know that the Church has conquered and will conquer for evermore.

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